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DECLARATION
OF THE
YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,
HELD
IN PHILADELPHIA,
RESPECTING THE PROCEEDINGS OF THOSE WHO HAVE LATELY
SEPARATED FROM THE SOCIETY;
AND ALSO,
SHOWING THE CONTRAST
BETWEEN
THEIR DOCTRINES AND THOSE HELD
BY
FRIENDS.

New York.

PRINTED BY SAMUEL WOOD AND SONS.

1828.

A DECLARATION
OF THE
YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS, &c.

At a Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia, by adjournments from the 21st of the Fourth month, to the 28th of the same, inclusive, 1828—

THE Meeting for Sufferings having been engaged in preparing a declaration of the principal causes and progress of the schism which has taken place on the part of some under our name, within the limits of this Yearly Meeting, and which also exhibits the doctrines of the Separatists, contrasted with the principles and faith of our religious Society, it was deliberately read; and the meeting being brought into a serious consideration of the affecting evidence which it furnishes, of the desolating consequences produced by the spirit and principles of unbelief and insubordination, and believing that it is due to the cause of Christianity, and the reputation of our religious Society, to bear our testimony to the world, against the antisciptural doctrines, and disorganizing proceedings and conduct of the Separatists, fully unites with this declaration and testimony, and directs it to be signed by the clerk, and published on behalf of this meeting. It being as follows.

In taking a view of the situation of our Religious Society, and of the various exercises and close trials, which those who love our Lord Jesus Christ, have had to pass through, we believe it important to preserve a faithful narrative of the schism which has taken place among some under our name, and to trace the subtle workings of that spirit of unbelief and insubordination which has been the primary cause of it—a spirit which has been privily brought in among us, under the specious appearance of a refined spirituality, but which has blinded the understandings of many, and led them, step by step, into an open denial of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, as they are laid down by our blessed Releemer and his apostles, in the Holy Scriptures.

Previous to entering on the proposed narrative, it may not be improper to notice the rise of our Religious Society, and some of the troubles which befel it during its infancy. It pleased the Lord Almighty in the dispensations of his infinite wisdom and goodness, to gather our worthy predecessors out of the various professions and worships of the world, to release them from the formalities of a ceremonial religion, and by the immediate teachings of his Holy Spirit to bring them to the knowledge of himself, as he is revealed in and through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Instructed in the nature of that worship which is acceptable to the Father, and yielding obedience to the discipline of the cross, they were led into purity of life and conversation, evincing great tenderness of conscience, and a fear of doing any thing which might bring a shade upon their holy profession. Thus they became as "a city set on a hill that could not be hid," and many were convinced of the truth, and joined in fellowship with them.

In the faithful maintenance of the doctrines and testimonies committed to them, they endured much persecution and bitter suffering, but notwithstanding the various obstacles they had to contend with, the society rapidly increased, and when William Penn received the grant of Pennsylvania, many of the members migrated with him, and found a peaceful retreat from the persecutions which awaited them in their own land. The privations which they were subjected to in a new country, being favourable to that simplicity and self-denial which their profession inculcates, they became a religious body comprising many substantial and divinely gifted members, in whose hands the cause of truth prospered, and many meetings were established. But the old Adversary who envies the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and is ever busily striving to lay waste the work of righteousness in the earth, wrought upon the hearts of some restless and ambitious individuals, who had once been favoured instruments in the Lord's hand, filling their minds with envy and prejudice against their brethren, and leading them into open opposition to those things, which in the days of their fidelity, they had believed in—and finally into separation from the society. This was sorrowfully the case with John Wilkinson and John Story and their party in England. The apostacy and misconduct of these Separatists brought great reproach upon the society, and subjected those who stood firm in their first love, to deeper exercises, and more painful trials, than all the outward afflictions which they endured from their cruel persecutors. It was a common outcry among them, "Away with your order; let every one be left to his liberty." They made "disturbances in meetings to the breaking of the Church's peace, causing divisions amongst Friends; publishing to the world wicked and scandalous books against Friends, shutting and keeping Friends out of their common meeting houses, in which they have a just right and property, and not suffering them to meet therein; and, at length, also set up separate meetings, in opposition to the meetings of God's people." See Ellwood's Journal, p. 275.

In this country, the peace and harmony of our religious Society, was early interrupted by George Keith. His ambitious, aspiring disposi-

tion, led him to attempt introducing innovations in principle and practice, and when he found that discerning Friends would not be drawn into his measures, he endeavoured to divide the Society, and to set up a yearly meeting, and other separate meetings, within the limits of this Yearly Meeting. But the Society steadily adhered to its doctrines and discipline, whilst he and his party, persisting in their disorganizing attempts, were scattered from the fold of Christ, and many of them were finally disowned. The revolutionary war was productive of new trials upon the stability of the Society. Numbers were drawn aside to violate its testimony against war, but while such experienced much unsettlement, the sincerely exercised and faithful members, were more closely united in a deep religious concern, for their preservation upon the sure foundation, that they might give practical evidence of the peaceable nature of the Messiah's kingdom, by acting on all occasions consistently therewith. Thus, though it has been assailed by severe trials, within and without, the Society continued as a body firmly united in faith and discipline, and through the mercy and protection of our holy and divine Leader, was still enabled to hold up a light to the world.

Causes, however, have been operating for several years, to prepare the way for the introduction of opinions, repugnant to our religious principles and doctrines, and tending to lay waste that love and Christian fellowship, which have so conspicuously distinguished the Society, and given effect to its exertions in the cause of universal righteousness. Lukewarmness respecting the important work of religion, an increasing love of the world, and an eager pursuit of its riches, pleasures, and fashions, disqualifying many for usefulness in the church, introduced weakness, and eclipsed the brightness of our Christian profession, which had shone so eminently in the example of our worthy ancestors. Others who were influenced by a restless aspiring disposition, have at different periods opposed the administration of a sound discipline, and endeavoured to throw off those salutary restraints, indispensable to the existence of every well regulated society. Among other causes which have contributed to its weakness, is the too easy reception of papers of acknowledgment from those who had transgressed the discipline, and the admission of persons into membership who had not been sufficiently grounded in the doctrines of the Christian faith. But one of the most fertile sources of evil, has been the neglect of many of our members, in not bestowing upon their offspring a guarded religious education; labouring to imbue their susceptible minds with the saving truths of the gospel, and habituating them to frequent reading of the holy scriptures. For want of this godly concern on the part of parents and teachers, many of our youth have grown up in great ignorance of those all-important subjects, as well as of the history and principles of our ancient Friends; so that many have fallen an easy prey to the cavils and sophistry of designing men, who were seeking to lead them astray, by infusing doubts into their minds respecting the truths of the Christian revelation.

In the lapse of a few years, it has pleased the Lord in his unsearch-

able wisdom to remove from works to rewards many eminent servants, who stood as faithful watchmen upon the walls of Zion, and being clothed with the spirit of discernment, were enabled to detect the various stratagems of the enemy, and to defeat his attempts to lay waste the Society. Sentiments promulgated at different periods by Elias Hicks, a minister belonging to Jericho, on Long Island, occasioned great uneasiness in the minds of some of those Friends, and others, who privately communicated their apprehensions to him. A spirit of libertinism and independency, fostered and strengthened by the neglect of proper discipline in families, prepared many to listen with delight to such sentiments, which were before unknown in the communications of our ministers. The disclosure of his views, however, was gradual, and for a long time in a very covert manner. The subordination and respect due from youth, to age and experience, which true religion ever enforces, were undermined by his frequent suggestions, that their elder friends were "sticking in the traditions of their fathers, and could not go on with the work of reformation, and it was therefore necessary that the young people should come forward *and take the lead.*" The observance of the first day of the week, was held up as being superstitious; and those who did not join with him in rejecting the products of slave labour, were compared with the most abandoned and wicked characters, and pronounced to be unfit to take any part in promoting the cause of Truth. Whilst he thus boldly denounced those who could not adopt his views, others were flattered and enlisted with his attentions; and thus the Society was gradually, and imperceptibly divided by his doctrines, and the strong contrasts which he drew, between different portions of it.

Under the plausible pretext of exalting the "light within," as the primary rule of faith and practice, he endeavoured to lessen the authority of the Holy Scriptures; and when he had greatly impaired the sentiments of reverence justly due to their divine testimony, he proceeded to speak of our blessed Saviour, as being merely an example or pattern to us, and denied that his death was an offering for the sins of mankind, except for the legal sins of the Jews, calling him the Jewish Messiah. Faithful, experienced Friends, who were established in the doctrines of Christ and his apostles, and who saw the baneful consequences that must result from the promulgation of such opinions, were brought under much painful solicitude, for the preservation of the Society, as many were caught with the speciousness of his arguments, and the bold and confident manner with which he advanced them. Having proceeded further in avowing his disbelief in our Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of men, publicly declaring, that the same power that *made him a Christian*, must make us Christians, and that the same power that *saved him*, must save us; he was again privately laboured with, in order to convince him of his error; and upon being told that if he persisted in preaching these doctrines, so contrary to the scriptures, and the testimony of our ancient Friends, it would produce one of the greatest schisms that had ever happened in the Society, he admitted that it would produce a schism,

but that it would soon be over, for he believed HIS DOCTRINES must and would prevail. He was so confirmed in his sentiments, that he said he should persevere therein, " *let the consequences be what they might.*"

In the twelfth month, 1822, Elias Hicks came to Philadelphia, with certificates from his Monthly and Quarterly meetings, to pay a visit to some parts of our Yearly meeting, including the families of two of the Monthly meetings of this city. It was well known to many Friends, that he was charged with holding and propagating opinions, incompatible with the doctrines always held by our religious Society, and some of the elders being informed by two Friends who were present at a meeting in the Southern Quarter, that he there advocated such opinions, two of them called upon him on his arrival in Philadelphia, and stated the information they had received, and proposed an interview between him and these two Friends, which he refused to accede to. Another attempt was made to procure such an interview, which he also rejected. As the friends of Elias Hicks, as guardians of the ministry, and of the flock over which they were placed as overseers, the elders believed it to be their duty still to seek a conference with him, that " if any incorrect statement had been made, it might be speedily rectified, or if true, that he should be possessed of the concern and judgment of his friends thereon." But after a time and place was fixed, they failed in their brotherly attempt to obtain the proposed interview, by his encouraging a number of his partizans to intrude themselves into the company. The elders then addressed a letter to him, declaring that they " could not have religious unity with his conduct, nor with the doctrines he was charged with promulgating." In a subsequent communication, having the accounts of his unsoundness corroborated by his public discourses in this city, they state that they were " fully and sorrowfully confirmed in the conclusion, that he holds and is disseminating principles very different from those which are held and maintained by our religious Society, and that as he had closed the door against the brotherly care and endeavours of the elders for his benefit, and for the clearing our religious profession, they think the subject ought to claim the weighty attention of his Friends at home."

From this period may be dated the regular organization of a party devoted to his interests. Active exertions were used by those who have since stood conspicuous amongst the promoters of the present separation, to enlist every one they could, in favour of him and his opinions. Unjust and unfounded representations were industriously spread throughout the Society, in order to create a prejudice against those who could not conscientiously approve his conduct and anti-christian views, especially against Friends in Philadelphia, who openly avowed their disunity with him. Much animosity was manifested by his adherents, and the false reports and opprobrious epithets, applied to those who bore a faithful testimony against his principles and ministry, gave ample proof of the origin, and disorganizing tendency, of such doctrines.

Under these circumstances our Yearly meeting convened in 1823.

Amongst the subjects which had claimed the attention of the Meeting for Sufferings, they believed it proper as representatives of the Yearly meeting, to disclaim certain controversial essays, printed in a periodical paper at Wilmington, Delaware, appearing to be written in the name of the Society, but which contained sentiments incompatible with those it had always held and professed. A short minute for the purpose was adopted and forwarded to the editor; a few selections from the writings of Friends were also prepared by a committee to accompany the minute, showing our faith upon those controverted points of doctrine. But the meeting deciding that the minute would be sufficient, it was agreed to print the selections in a pamphlet, to be distributed to our members, for the purpose of reminding them of those excellent Christian principles which our forefathers held, and suffered for. When the minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings were read in the Yearly meeting, its authority to prepare those selections, was questioned by some of those who have since separated from us; many severe reflections were passed upon that body; and much disturbance created by the disaffected upon this occasion. While some professed to admit, that the sentiments contained in the extracts might be correct, they unjustly charged the Meeting for Sufferings, with attempting to impose a creed upon the Society; others condemned the doctrines themselves, as contrary to scripture, reason, and revelation, although selected from works which had been repeatedly approved by the Society. Great noise and confusion prevailed amongst them, and the meeting adjourned. At the next sitting, one of the leaders of the disaffected party, proposed that those extracts should be expunged from the minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings; but as this would have implied a disavowal of the doctrines they contained, the meeting refused to accede to it. The clamour and violence of the opposers was such, that in order to obtain a state of quietude in the meeting, Friends at length consented to direct the Meeting for Sufferings to suspend the publication of the pamphlet, which had been printed, and placed in the book-room. We have thought it right thus to rehearse the facts relating to this subject, because they have been grossly misrepresented in various places, and motives and designs attributed to Friends, which were not only untrue, but absolutely unfounded.

Although the disaffected members denied the right of the Meeting for Sufferings, to prepare and publish extracts from the writings of our early friends, yet afterwards they themselves assumed the right of doing so, and published a pamphlet of extracts, the object of which was to support the doctrinal views of Elias Hicks. In making their selections great injustice was done to the authors from whose works they were taken, material parts of sentences being omitted, and in some places words were introduced, so as to change entirely the true meaning of the writer, and even to make him contradict himself. In the progress of this spirit of misrepresentation and division, much labour was privately bestowed, to convince individuals of the unsoundness of the doctrines preached by Elias Hicks, and by some other ministers who had adopted his opin-

ions, and to shew the desolating effects that would be produced by them upon the Society. But such was the strength of prejudice against sound friends, that arguments or entreaties in most instances were unavailing, and these endeavours to convince were often met with unkind reflections and criminations.

From the decided opposition which they had made to the dissemination of unsound principles, it was apparent to the advocates of the "new views," that the elders, and members of the Meeting for Sufferings, would present a great obstacle to their general adoption. Unwearied efforts were therefore used to bring them into discredit, and to alienate Friends from them; and after great exertion to accomplish this object, a plan was projected for altering the discipline, so as to make these appointments subject to frequent change. Accordingly, in 1825, the project was introduced into one of the Quarterly meetings, where the disaffected party predominated, and a minute made, "contrary to the solid sense and judgment of many friends," proposing that all important appointments should be made for a limited time. On its introduction to the Yearly meeting, much discussion ensued, in which the party urged their favourite measure, but the meeting decided, that such a rule would be unsafe, and it was dismissed.

As a further means for spreading the views of the seceding party, and giving strength to their cause, they widely circulated a volume of discourses, delivered by Elias Hicks, in one of his visits within this Yearly meeting, which contain sentiments correspondent with those he had long been charged with holding, directly repugnant to the glorious character of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Saviour and Redeemer of men, our Mediator and Advocate with the Father, and also undervaluing the Holy Scriptures. A periodical paper called the Berean, devoted to the same cause, was also set up, and circulated amongst our members, in which was a series of essays, openly attacking the acknowledged doctrines of Friends, and tending to subvert their faith in the divinity of Christ, and his propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind; by which we believe many have been turned into the paths of scepticism, and thereby lost that true peace and assurance which are only found in the faith of the gospel. The lamentable effects of the principles disseminated by such publications, became more and more obvious. Accustomed to hear the sacred truths of Christian redemption called in question, many lost that awe which those solemn subjects had heretofore inspired, and allowed themselves the liberty of speaking upon them in a light and very irreverent manner. The arising and spreading of the power of Truth in our assemblies for divine worship, was much obstructed by the spirit of unbelief, and opposition increased among the disaffected to the administration of the discipline, especially when it was likely to displace any of their own party. In some meetings, where they had the control, unjustifiable measures were adopted to promote party purposes, thereby producing great distress and exercise to Friends. Notwithstanding all their efforts, they did not obtain that complete ascendancy which their leaders anxiously desired, Friends being enabled, through the merciful

interposition of divine assistance, to maintain their ground, with a good degree of firmness, against the inroads of infidelity, and the flood of reproach and false accusations, which was poured forth against them ; and the disaffected therefore determined to use some further means to bring about a revolution.

Previous to the Yearly meeting in 1827, John Comly in the station of a minister, having obtained a minute from his Monthly meeting, under profession of religious concern to pay a visit to Friends, went about into different parts of the country, holding private meetings with a view of promoting disaffection, and preparing the minds of such members as could be entrusted with his designs, for a separation from the Society, provided certain plans which were devised for carrying the Yearly meeting with them, should fail. Other individuals attached to the party, were busily engaged in attending different Quarterly meetings, endeavouring to foment dissatisfaction, and to procure the appointment of persons, as representatives to the approaching Yearly meeting, who they knew would be in favour of changing the clerk, a measure which they were anxiously desirous to effect. Two of the Quarterly meetings where the Separatists predominated, doubled the number of their representatives, in the hope of effecting that change, and another increased its usual number one-half. Propositions were sent up from those two Quarterly meetings, to reconsider the discipline relating to the appointment of Elders, and members of the Meeting for Sufferings. By one of them it was proposed that "such appointments be made for a limited time ;" and by the other, that "if it may be thought right to continue said meeting [for Sufferings] the appointment of its members may be exclusively confined to the Quarterly meetings and subject to their removal."—and "that Monthly meetings shall be authorised to remove elders, whenever it may appear their service in that station has ceased to promote the best interests of society." A remonstrance was also transmitted against the Meeting for Sufferings, for declining to acknowledge the right of the Southern Quarterly meeting to displace two of its representatives in that body, without discipline, and without any charge of delinquency.

Many of the members of our religious Society, having now for a long time indulged a spirit of insubordination, and their affections having become estranged from the principles and doctrines of the Society, as well as from those friends who stood firm in support of its order and discipline, there was little probability that they would assemble at the Yearly Meeting in a proper state of mind for transacting the weighty concerns of the Church, or with a disposition to seek after the judgment of truth. When the representatives met at the direction of the Yearly meeting to deliberate upon a clerk, and a friend to assist him, the disaffected party proposed John Comly for clerk, and strongly urged the nomination. It was well known that he had been actively engaged in holding those clandestine meetings, for the purpose of dividing the Society, that his partizans had pre-determined upon a change, in order to get the control of the Yearly meeting, and as it was evident, the representatives could not unite in a new nomi-

nation, Friends believed it right to advocate the continuance of the present clerk, who had acceptably served the meeting, and been heretofore chosen without opposition. After being together nearly three hours, without any prospect of agreeing, it was proposed and acceded to, that a friend should inform the meeting, they were not able to unite in any name for clerk. This report was accordingly made to the Yearly meeting at its next sitting ; and after it was given in, an ancient friend arose and stated, that during his attendance of that meeting, embracing a period of sixty years, it had been the custom to continue the old clerk, until another could be appointed in the unity, and he therefore proposed that the present clerk should be continued, which was accordingly done ; a large number of Friends expressing themselves in favour of it, and several of the opposition eventually acceding to it. It is proper to state these facts, in order to shew that the assertion made by the Separatists in their address, that a clerk was imposed upon the meeting, is without any foundation.

Early after the meeting convened on the following morning, John Comly, the assistant clerk, who stands conspicuous as a principal leader among the Separatists, rose, and informed the meeting, that an irreconcileable difference existed in the Society, and therefore he could not conscientiously act as the organ of a body under this circumstance, and proposed an indefinite adjournment of the meeting. As there would have been no difficulty in supplying his place, had he simply requested to be released, it was evidently his design to disband the Yearly meeting, and thereby furnish his party with a pretext for setting up a meeting of their own, with a clerk devoted to their views and purposes. Friends were sorrowfully affected with a sense of the mischievous workings of a rending disorganizing spirit, that was seeking to overturn the excellent order which had been long established amongst us, and to reduce the Society to a state of anarchy and confusion, which had been heretofore so signally owned and preserved, by the blessed presence of the Great Head of the Church.— Still favoured with confidence in his mercy and all-sufficiency, they remained calm and centered to the divine gift in themselves, while the disaffected party were urging the meeting to adjourn. When it was found that they could not succeed in breaking up the meeting, but that it was enabled to maintain its dignity and authority, in refusing to comply with the unprecedented and disorderly proposal for an indefinite adjournment, the assistant clerk, notwithstanding his previous declaration, offered to serve the meeting. A fair opportunity had thus been given to all disaffected persons, to prevent if practicable the continuance of the meeting, or if they were so disposed, to withdraw from all participation in its proceedings. It was the next sitting to that in which the clerks had been reappointed, but so far from withdrawing, many of those who have since seceded were earnest in requesting John Comly to continue at the table, which the meeting submitted to. By thus reappointing the assistant clerk on his own proposal, the Separatists fully recognised the organization of the Yearly meeting and were consequently bound by its conclusions. They

moreover recognised it, by uniting in its decisions on several subsequent occasions, particularly in raising a sum of money to aid our brethren of North Carolina, in removing the coloured people under their care. When the extracts from the minutes of the Yearly meeting were sent down to the Quarterly meetings, they were read and minuted in all of them but one, and all the Quarters raised their several proportions of money as directed by the Yearly meeting and paid it into the hands of the regular treasurer, to be placed at the disposal of the Meeting for Sufferings, thereby anticipating the continued existence of Philadelphia Yearly meeting on its original foundation, and its representative body the Meeting for Sufferings.— Notwithstanding which, the Separatists have been so disingenuous as to assume its title, and have unjustly attempted to make the impression on the public, that their association which they have since formed, contrary to the order of our Society, is the Yearly meeting of Philadelphia.

In relation to those propositions which were forwarded to the Yearly meeting from the three Quarterly meetings, it is proper to remark, that a number of the Separatists held a private meeting, in which they concluded to propose that they should be dismissed, which was accordingly done at their own suggestion. After having decided in a meeting composed exclusively of their own party, that the subjects should be postponed, with what candour or justice can they allege their dismissal as an accusation against the Yearly meeting?

During the week of the Yearly meeting the Separatists held several other secret meetings among themselves, in violation of that harmony and brotherhood which had been so conspicuous amongst Friends, in order to arrange a plan for dismembering the Yearly meeting. At these meetings they prepared an address to the members of our Religious Society, in which they say:—

“ Our attention has been turned to the present condition of this Yearly meeting and its different branches, and by evidence on every hand, we are constrained to declare that the unity of this body is interrupted; that a division exists among us, developing in its progress views which appear incompatible with each other, and feelings averse to a reconciliation. DOCTRINES held by one part of Society, and which we *believe* to be *sound and edifying*, are pronounced by the *other* part to be *unsound and spurious*. From THIS has resulted a state of things that has proved destructive of peace and tranquillity, and in which the fruits of love and condescension *have been blasted*, and the comforts and enjoyments even of social intercourse greatly diminished. Measures have been pursued which we deem oppressive, and in their nature and tendency calculated to undermine and destroy those benefits, to establish and perpetuate which, should be the purpose of every religious association.”

It must be obvious to every one who reads this narrative of the facts connected with the progress of the separation, that the introduction of antichristian opinions has been the grand cause which has led to it; and however the Separatists may have since endeavoured to cover their designs and to make a different impression, in the ex-

tract we have just made from the first exhibit of their grievances, they there fully admit that they have their origin in doctrinal differences.

They proceed to declare, " It is under a solemn and deliberate view of this painful state of our affairs, that we feel bound to express to you, under a settled conviction of mind, that the period has **FULLY come**, in which we ought to look towards making a *quiet retreat* from this scene of confusion, and we therefore recommend to you deeply to weigh the momentous subject and to adopt such a course as truth, under a solid and solemn deliberation, may point to," &c. It is evident from this address, that the minds of those who adopted it, were fully prepared for a separation from our religious Society, and for the establishment of an association of their own, and we might suppose they were sincere in wishing to " make a quiet retreat." But, at the sitting of the Yearly Meeting, directly succeeding the evening on which this address was agreed upon, they again came into our meeting, and made violent opposition to a concern which was brought from our women's Yearly meeting for appointing a committee to visit the Quarterly and Monthly meetings. This proposal having been weightily considered and united with by the women's meeting, was cordially received by many brethren ; but the Separatists perceiving that it would interfere with their plans for drawing away our members, and with the contemplated dissolution of the Yearly meeting, raised a great outcry against it. Such was the tumult they threw themselves into, that friends who desired all their conclusions might be under the calming influence of the presence of the Head of the Church, doubted for a time, whether that solemn, quiet deliberation could be attained, which would warrant them in making the appointment. At this juncture the meeting was informed by a friend who was at the separate meeting held the preceding evening, of the conclusions then adopted, and that further measures were suggested for effecting their disjunction ; the inconsistency of their attempting to control the decisions of the meeting after having virtually withdrawn from it was so palpable, that convicted of it themselves, they then proposed to leave the appointment exclusively to Friends, and when their noise ceased, a covering of peaceful solemnity spread over the meeting, under which the appointment was made with much unanimity, and we believe it was a measure that originated in best Wisdom.

At this sitting the meeting closed its business and adjourned to meet again next year, at the usual time specified in its printed constitution. It appeared to be quite as numerously attended as any other sitting during the week, and no opposition was made to the adjournment by a single member, which was a tacit admission on the part of the disaffected, that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting would convene at the usual time and place ; and consequently the assembly of any part of it at a different time, under that name, is a mere assumption, without any claim whatever to its title or character.

In the 6th month following the Separatists held another meeting at Green-street, and issued an epistle to our members, in which they as-

sert that the committee just alluded to, "was appointed without the unity of the meeting, and contrary to the solid sense and judgment of much the larger number of the members in attendance." This charge is incorrect, and extremely ungenerous. Having determined as far as was in their power to dissolve the bands of society, and throw it into a state of distraction and confusion, it could not be supposed *they* were in a state of mind qualified to exercise any solid sense and judgment respecting such a concern, or that *they* would unite with a measure which must in considerable degree disconcert *their* schemes. After coming to a resolution to make a quiet retreat, it was certainly highly indecorous in them to interfere in the transactions of those they professed to be retreating from, but although they did not unite with the concern, many of them openly acquiesced in it.

It was not long after the rise of the Yearly meeting, before the work of disorganization commenced. Notwithstanding the Separatists profess in their address, to have no other discipline to propose to those in unity with them, but that of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in the following week Green-street Monthly meeting declared itself independent of Philadelphia Quarterly meeting, to which it belonged, and afterwards was received as a branch of Abington Quarter, contrary to the discipline and usage of the Society, and regardless of the remonstrance of Philadelphia Quarter against the measure. A considerable part of Radnor Monthly meeting made a like application, and was received by the same Quarter as though it was the Monthly meeting. A similar course was pursued by Bucks Quarter, in receiving a part of Mount Holly Monthly meeting, a branch of Burlington Quarterly meeting. Members of other Monthly meetings applied to, and were acknowledged as members by Darby and Byberry Monthly meetings, without certificate and without removing their residence, and in several instances, while they were under care for violations of the discipline. Byberry Monthly meeting and Abington Quarter, attempted to set up a separate meeting, composed of persons, some of whom were disowned, and others not their members, and to constitute it a Monthly meeting, within the limits of Philadelphia Quarter. Thus the rights of meetings have been invaded, the judgment of Friends expressed in opposition to these proceedings totally disregarded, and the long established order and usage of the Society infringed and laid waste.

In the sixth month epistle they say, "We therefore, &c. have agreed to propose for your consideration, the propriety and expediency of holding a Yearly meeting for Friends *in unity with us*, residing within the limits of those Quarterly meetings, heretofore represented in the Yearly meeting held in Philadelphia; for which purpose it is recommended that Quarterly and Monthly meetings, *which may be prepared for such a measure*, should appoint representatives to meet in Philadelphia, on the third second-day in the tenth month next, at 10 o'clock in the morning, in company with other members *favourable to our views*, there to hold a Yearly meeting of men and women friends," &c. To prepare the members for this measure, the principal leaders have been busily engaged, in holding meetings "heretofore unknown

to the Society ;" and in attending Quarterly and Monthly meetings for the purpose of detaching them from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. In effecting their disjunction from Friends, many of them conducted on various occasions, with great clamour and indecorum, employing terms of abuse against those, whom they charged with domination and arbitrary proceedings, by which our religious meetings were converted into scenes of uproar and confusion. Instead of quietly withdrawing from our communion, according to their public professions, individuals who had been disowned, or whose cases were upon the minutes of their Monthly meetings, repeatedly came into meetings to which they had never belonged, and by their presence, or rude interference, prevented Friends from transacting the business, and obliged them to adjourn, when they and their party kept the house to serve their own purposes. They have changed the time of holding mid-week meetings in some instances, and when Friends have come to the house on the usual day, they have found it locked and they debarred an entrance. Wherever it has been in their power, though they pretend to retreat from us, they have obtained possession and control of the meeting houses, so that Friends in many parts of the country, notwithstanding they adhere to the principles, and discipline and worship of the Society, have been obliged to provide themselves with accommodations elsewhere. As they depend very much upon the influence of numbers, indefatigable exertions have been used and various schemes resorted to, in order to induce persons to join their ranks. Not only has division been thus brought into meetings which had heretofore harmonized, but domestic peace and comfort has been in many instances affectingly broken up, by the baneful influences of this restless unhappy spirit, which has passed like a flood through our borders, carrying away in its course many who had appeared to be in good measure settled upon the immutable foundation. But, alas! for want of abiding in a state of humble watchfulness in the fear of the Lord, which would have preserved them from the snares of death, they have been deceived in an evil hour; and confiding in their own righteousness, and in their own strength, not being able to discern the nature of this spirit, they have thus fallen a prey to its insidious presentations. The unsoundness in principle of many of the leading Separatists, has been often denied, notwithstanding the plainest proofs of it have been repeatedly adduced; and lest it should prevent some fearful, timid persons from joining them, their real sentiments have, on many occasions, been concealed or glossed over. Thus by various artifices and unwearied labours a considerable part of the members in some of the branches of this meeting, have become separated from the Society of Friends, and in the tenth month last held a meeting, under the assumed title of Philadelphia Yearly meeting, which adjourned to meet again on the second second-day in the fourth month, 1828.

Having endeavoured to give a faithful narrative of some of the prominent events which have marked the course of the present schism, of which it is alleged that the promulgation of doctrines subversive of the faith of our religious Society, has been the primary cause, it re-

mains to exhibit these doctrines from works acknowledged by the Separatists, and which they have widely circulated for the purpose of disseminating their views ; and also to contrast these doctrines with those which have been always held and professed by the Society of Friends from its rise to the present day. It should be distinctly recollected that in the first official document which they issued, and in which they declare the grounds of their dissatisfaction with Friends, the Separatists assert that " DOCTRINES held by one part of Society, and which *we believe* to be *sound* and *edifying*, are pronounced by the *other part* to be *UNsound and spurious*. FROM THIS has resulted a state of things, that has proved destructive of peace and tranquillity, and in which the fruits of love and condescension *have been blasted* and the *comforts* and *enjoyments*, even of *social intercourse* greatly diminished." The address containing this déclaration is signed by direction and on behalf of the meeting held on the 19th, 20th, and 21st of the 4th month 1827, by John Comly and nine other persons from different parts of our Yearly meeting, and we regard it as a candid acknowledgment that from those doctrines, which Friends pronounce " to be *unsound* and *spurious*," but which they " believe to be *sound* and *edifying*," have resulted the difficulties in which the Society has been involved.

In their epistle issued in the 6th month following, they further allege that " faithful friends in the ministry were unjustly charged with preaching infidel doctrines, denying the divinity of Christ, and undervaluing the Scriptures." We know of no faithful friends against whom these charges have been advanced. But there are those, who not keeping in a state of humility and subjection to the Cross of Christ, which would have preserved them in the unity of the faith, and in a willingness to endure suffering for the gospel's sake, have listened to the voice of the stranger, and being deceived by his transformations, as the appearance of an angel of light, they have by degrees lost their habitation in the blessed truth, and made shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience. Some of these continuing to exercise the office of ministers, which they once acceptably occupied among us, have been led, step by step, to broach doctrines which are subversive of the Christian faith, and contrary to the doctrines and principles of our religious Society. This defection, however, is not confined to those who were ministers, but there are many others, who hold and are engaged in propagating the same unsound sentiments. Their various plans have been arranged and directed, to procure the adoption of these sentiments, as the faith of the Society ; but disappointed at last by their failure, and perceiving that Friends were increasingly alive to the importance of preserving the Society from the dangerous effects of such doctrines, the only alternative, in their view, was a complete severance from its communion.

We shall not attempt to trace their unsoundness through all its ramifications, but we shall adduce evidence from their own works, which we believe must conclusively prove, that they deny the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he is the Redeemer and Saviour of men.

our Propitiation and Mediator with the Father, and also that they undervalue the Holy Scriptures. The selections are chiefly taken from the discourses of Elias Hicks. Most of their ministers inculcate the same opinions, but we have confined ourselves to a few of those discourses which are before the public in print. Extracts are also made from the Berean, a periodical publication which the Separatists have circulated for several years, as a standard work on the faith of the Society, but which we believe has had a very pernicious effect in leading astray many sincere-hearted people, who were not aware of the poison that is insidiously conveyed through its pages. This work, speaking of the volume of Elias Hicks' discourses, already noticed, says, "it will make the traditional outside Christian startle, and the dreamers, high priests, the scribes and pharisees of every denomination to gnash their teeth; but the *great body of the society* on this continent, of which this venerable minister is a member, together with many other *unshackled minds*, will *set their seals to the doctrines which it contains.*" Vol. I. p. 398.

In accordance with this declaration, several monthly meetings in which his adherents had the rule, and who have since joined the new sect, prepared and issued minutes expressive of their satisfaction with him and his doctrines. But the attendance of Elias Hicks at the General Association of the Separatists held in this month at Green street, establishes beyond all doubt, his unity with them in breaking their connection with the Society of Friends; and by placing a record on their minutes of his presence, and their satisfaction with his company, the Separatists, as a body, have formally identified themselves with him and his antichristian doctrines, a declaration of which he openly made in very palpable terms, in one of their largest meetings on the preceding day.

We shall proceed with the extracts, commencing with their opinions respecting the Holy Scriptures.

Elias Hicks says, "If the scriptures were absolutely necessary, he had power to communicate them to all the nations of the earth, for he has his way as a path in the clouds: he knows how to deal out to all his rational children. But they were not necessary, and perhaps not suited to any other people, than they to whom they were written." Philadelphia Sermons, page 119.

"One would suppose that to a rational mind, the hearing and reading of the instructive parables of Jesus would have a tendency to reform and turn men about to truth and lead them on in it. But they have no such effect." Ibid. p. 129.

"They have been so bound up in the letter, that they think they must attend to it, to the exclusion of every thing else. Here is an abominable idol worship, of a thing *without any life at all, a dead monument.*" Ibid. p. 139.

"The great and only thing needful then is, to turn inward, and turn our back upon the letter, for it is *all shadow.*" Ibid. p. 225.

"Now the book we read in says, 'Search the scriptures,' but this is incorrect, we must *all see it is incorrect*; because we have all reason to believe they read the scriptures, and hence they accused Jesus of being an impostor." Ibid. p. 314.

"He [Jesus] does not move us *in the least degree to any book, or writing whatever*, but leaves every thing outward entirely behind as having passed by, for *he abolished all external evidence*, as not being capable of bringing about salvation to the soul." See Quaker; E. Hicks's sermon, vol. II. p. 264.

"*No experience will ever be worth any thing to us*, which is not our own experience, begotten through the influence of the blessed spirit of God." N. York sermons, p. 123.

Thomas Wetherald, at an irregular meeting held at Green street, says, "And I want us therefore, in our investigation of spiritual things, to bring *spiritual* evidence to prove spiritual truths. Let us attend to spiritual reflections, and not be looking to the *Scriptures*, and to the systems of men, and to the words of preachers; for *all* these being of an external character, *can only form an ignis fatuus*, which 'leads to bewilder and dazzles to blind.'" Quaker, vol. II. p. 217.

In accordance with the above sentiments concerning the Holy Scriptures, the Berean says, "*In vain does any man quote the Scriptures as authority for his opinions*; for if they have not been immediately revealed to his own mind by the Holy Spirit, they deserve no better name as it respects him, than *speculations*." Vol. II. p. 211.

"Those revelations were for other times and other states, and *not for us*. They belong to those to whom they were immediately revealed. And that, and *only that*, which is immediately revealed to us, belongs in like manner to us and *to us only*." Ibid. p. 212.

"Now the revelations respecting the nature of God, which were made to the Israelites, are true when viewed as in connection with, and as having relation to their spiritual condition; but to *any other state*, they are *not true*; therefore *such revelations* abstractedly taken, are **NOT TRUE IN THEMSELVES—ARE NOT THE TRUTH OF GOD.**" Ibid. vol. I. p. 403.

We could select many other passages derogatory to the Holy Scriptures, but these are sufficient to show the contemptuous manner in which they are spoken of by the Separatists and their ministers. They assert that they are not necessary, and perhaps not suited to any other people, than those to whom they were written; they are a thing without any life at all, a dead monument, all shadow, upon which we should turn our backs; that the direction of our Lord to search them is not correct; that his parables have no such effect as a tendency to reform and turn men about to truth; that in *vain* does any man quote the Scriptures as authority for his opinions; that without immediate revelation they are no better than speculations; that they only form an *ignis fatuus* which leads to bewilder, and dazzles to blind; that no experience will ever be worth any thing to us which is not our own experience, and that that only belongs to us which is immediately revealed to us; and that the revelations which were made to the Israelites respecting the nature of God, **ARE NOT TRUE IN THEMSELVES; ARE NOT THE TRUTH OF GOD.**

We are not surprised that persons holding the opinions which they do, relating to the great truths of Christian redemption, should undervalue and endeavour to destroy the authority of the Holy Scriptures,

For so long as they are admitted to be a test of doctrine, all their pretended revelations which contradict the testimony of the Sacred Record, are properly condemned as " unsound and spurious." But we could not have supposed that at this enlightened day when their divine authority has been so abundantly confirmed, by the accomplishment of the ancient prophecies, and in the experience of the true Christian, that any of the professed believers of the " light within" would dare to assert, that those divine revelations respecting the nature of God, are not true in themselves, are not the truth of God. It is an affecting proof of the dreadful consequences of a spirit of scepticism and unbelief, that they should become so darkened as to speak in this irreverent manner of those weighty truths revealed to the Lord's servants, to whom he condescended to speak as face to face.

The Society of Friends have always fully believed in the authenticity and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and acknowledge them to be the only fit outward test of doctrines, having been dictated by the Holy Spirit of God, which cannot err. They are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works; and are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus; and whatever any teach or do contrary thereto, they reject as a delusion. Under a profession of exalting the light of Christ as the immediate means of salvation, which is a doctrine most fully believed by us, some have undervalued the Holy Scriptures, as being unnecessary to the Christian. It is contrary to the practice of the Society to speak of them in any such terms. We esteem them a great blessing to the Church, and desire to cultivate feelings of gratitude to the Great Disposer of events, for preserving them through various revolutions and vicissitudes, being fully persuaded that the more we become obedient to the manifestations of the light of Christ in the heart, the more precious and valuable are those inestimable writings to us.

In proof that these have been the sentiments of the Society from the beginning, we shall adduce the testimony of Robert Barclay and William Penn. In his Apology for the principles and doctrines of the people called Quakers, which we have always owned as a declaration of our faith, Robert Barclay says, " In this respect above mentioned then, we have shewn what service and use the Holy Scriptures, as managed in and by the Spirit, are of to the church of God; wherefore we do account them a secondary rule. Moreover because they are commonly acknowledged by all to have been written by the dictates of the Holy Spirit, and that the errors which may be supposed by the injury of times to have slipped in, are not such but that there is a sufficient clear testimony left to all the essentials of the Christian faith; we do look upon them as the only fit outward judge of controversies among Christians; and that whatsoever doctrine is contrary unto their testimony, may therefore justly be rejected as false. And for our parts we are very willing that all our doctrines and practices be tried by them; which we never refused, nor ever shall, in all controversies with our adversaries, as the judge and test. We shall

also be very willing to admit it as a positive certain maxim, *that whatsoever any do, pretending to the Spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil.*" p. 99.

William Penn, in his "Testimony to the Truth," after stating some groundless charges made against Friends, respecting their belief in the Holy Scriptures, says, "Whereas we in truth and sincerity believe them to be of divine authority, given by the inspiration of God through holy men, they speaking or writing them, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ; that they are a declaration of those things most surely believed by the primitive Christians, and that as they contain the mind and will of God, and are his commands to us, so they in that respect are his declaratory word ; and therefore are obligatory on us and are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished to every good work. Nay after all, so unjust is the charge [preferring our own books, &c.] and so remote from our belief concerning the Holy Scriptures, that we both love, honour, and prefer them, before all books in the world ; ever choosing to express our belief of the Christian faith and doctrine, in the terms thereof, and rejecting all principles or doctrines whatsoever, that are repugnant thereunto. Nevertheless we are well persuaded, that notwithstanding there is such an excellency in the Holy Scriptures, as we have above declared, yet the unstable, and unlearned in Christ's school, too often wrest them to their own destruction. And upon our reflection on their carnal constructions of them, we are made undervaluers of Scripture itself. But certain it is, that as the Lord hath been pleased to give us, the experience of the fulfilling of them in measure, so *it is altogether contrary to our faith and practice, to put ANY MANNER OF SLIGHT OR CONTEMPT UPON THEM,* much more of being guilty of what maliciously is suggested against us; since no society of professed Christians in the world, can have a more reverent and honourable esteem for them than we have. John iv. 24. xvi. 8. Rom. i. 19. Luke i. 1, 2. Tim. iii. 16, 17. 2 Pet. iii. 16." Vol. II. p. 878.

The Separatists would appear to be great advocates for divine revelation, at the same time they declare that the revelations made to the Lord's prophets respecting the divine nature are not true. In reference to all such pretensions, William Penn says, "That we renounce all fantastical, and whimsical intoxications, or any pretence to the revelation of new matter in opposition to the ancient gospel, declared by Christ Jesus and his apostles ; and therefore not the revelation of new things, but the renewed revelation of the eternal way of truth. That this revelation is the life, virtue, condition and very soul of the Gospel and second covenant." Vol. II. p. 48.

In the same essay : "If ye are led by the spirit of God, then are ye sons of God ; let this suffice to vindicate our sense of a true and unerring rule, which we assert, *not in a way of derogation from those Holy Writings,* which with reverence we read, believe and desire always to obey the mind and will of God therein contained ; **AND LET THAT DOCTRINE BE ACCURSED THAT WOULD OVERTURN THEM.**" Ibid. p. 62.

It must be evident to every candid mind, that the sentiments of the Separatists which we have quoted from their own works, are at perfect variance with the doctrines of our early Friends respecting the Holy Scriptures, however they may endeavour to make the impression upon the public mind, that they are one in faith with them.

In the next place we shall shew that they deny the miraculous conception of our Lord.

Elias Hicks says, "Who was his father? He was begotten of God. *We cannot suppose that it was the outward body of flesh and blood that was begotten of God*, but a birth of the spiritual life in the soul. We must apply it internally and spiritually. For *nothing can be a Son of God but that which is spirit*, and nothing but the soul of man is a recipient for the light and spirit of God. Therefore *nothing can be a Son of God but that which is immortal and invisible*. *Nothing visible can be a Son of God*. Every visible thing must come to an end, and we must know the mortality of it. Flesh and blood cannot enter into heaven. By the analogy of reason, spirit cannot beget a material body, because the thing begotten, must be of the same nature with its father. Spirit cannot beget any thing but spirit; it cannot beget flesh and blood. *No my friends it is impossible.*" Philad. sermons, p. 10.

"Now in his creed [the bishop of Rome] to which he made all the nations of Europe bow by the dint of the sword, was this of the *miraculous birth*, therefore all children for several hundred years, were brought up, and educated in this belief, *without any examination in regard to its correctness*. Finding this to be the case, I examined the accounts given on this subject by the four evangelists, and *according to my best judgment on the occasion*, I was led to think *there was considerable more scripture evidence for his being the son of Joseph, than otherwise*," &c. Elias Hicks to T. Willis.

The Berean says, "The flesh was made, not begotten, for the Word which is spiritual to appear in. A body hast thou prepared me. This does not convey to my mind, the *most distant idea* of the body of Christ being begotten of God." Vol. II. p. 27.

In these passages the miraculous conception of the body of Jesus Christ, by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, is plainly denied; as such unworthy sentiments are contrary to the declaration of Holy Scripture, we regard them as the "spurious" doctrines of infidelity or unbelief.

The succeeding extracts from the public printed discourses of the Separatists, clearly prove their denial of the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, his propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind, and degrade him to a level with his creature man, liable to be lost, and standing in need of salvation as he does.

Elias Hicks says, "For he [Jesus Christ] had read the law and understood it, because he was faithful to the *manifestation* of light; and it was dispensed to him, in *proportion* to his *necessity* to understand the law. For he had *not more given him* than would *enable him to fulfil it*, the *same as the other Israelites*; for if he had more, he could not be an example to them." Wilmington ser. Quaker, Vol. I. p. 193.

"We must turn our back upon them, and come home to the light

of God in us ; for it is the same spirit and life that was in Jesus Christ the Son of God." We need not say that it is *his* spirit, but *only* that it is the *same* spirit, a *portion* of which was in him ; because as *reasonable* beings, we must always take things *rationally*." Ibid. p. 197.

"And what encouragement, my friends, we receive through this medium, when we are brought by the light into a feeling of unity with our great pattern, Jesus Christ, and with God our Creator, O see, how we come up into an *equality with him*." Darby, ibid. p. 13.

" And we derive a portion of the same [spirit] which is able to save the soul if properly obeyed. Here now he was *put upon a level* ; &c. Ibid. p. 17.

" Here we find that the Son of God saw no alternative ; for if he gave up his testimony in order to save his natural life, he *could not be saved* with God's salvation : hence he surrendered to the divine will rather than to *lose his standing and favour* with his Almighty Father ; and what a blessed example it was." Ibid. p. 16.

" He was tempted in all points as we are. Now how could he be tempted, if he had been fixed in a *state of perfection* in which *he could not turn aside*. Can you suppose as rational beings, that such a being could be tempted ? No, not any more than God Almighty could be tempted. Perfection is perfection, and *cannot be tempted*. *It is impossible*." Philadelphia sermons, p. 253.

It would follow from this argument that Elias Hicks does not believe that our blessed Lord was perfect.

" Every Christian must come up under the influence of the same light that guided Jesus Christ—that *Christ* that was *his saviour, and preserver* ; and that power which enabled him to do his work, will enable us to come on in the same path." Quaker, vol. I. p. 44.

" I don't want to express a great many words, but I want you to be *called home to the substance*. For the *Scriptures* and all the books in the world can do no more. *Jesus could do no more* than to *recommend* to this comforter, which was this light in him." Ibid. p. 40.

" He never directed to himself, but all he wanted was to lead their minds to the spirit of Truth, to the light within, and when he had done this, *he had done his office*." Ibid. p. 47.

" If we believe that God is equal and righteous in all his ways, that he has made of one blood all the families that dwell upon the earth, it is impossible that he should be partial, and therefore he has been as willing to reveal his will to every creature, as he was to our first parents, to Moses and the prophets, to Jesus Christ and his apostles. *He never can set ANY OF THESE above us*, because if he did he would be partial." Philadelphia sermons, p. 292.

" From what Jesus himself said, *HE WAS NOT GOD*." N. York sermons, p. 96.

" He was *only an outward Saviour*, that healed their outward diseases, and gave them strength of body to enjoy that outward good land. This was a *figure* of the great Comforter, which he would pray the Father to send them ; an inward one, that would heal all the diseases of their souls, and cleanse them from all their inward pollutions, that *thing of God*, that *thing* of eternal life. It was the soul that

wanted salvation, but this no outward Saviour could do, no external Saviour could have any hand in it." Philadelphia sermons, p. 50.

"The apostle had allusion to that perfect righteousness which is the immediate saviour in the soul, Christ within the hope of glory; but it was not that outward Jesus Christ that was the hope of glory." Quaker, Vol. I, p. 164.

"It [the light] is truly God in man; for as he fills all things, he cannot be located in any thing which is capable of being located, because to suppose that all the fulness of God was in Christ, is to take him out of every other part of the world." Ibid. p. 166.

"Oh dearly beloved friends, young and old, may you gather deeper and deeper to that which is within the vail, where we may have access to our God WITHOUT ANY MEDIATOR." Quaker, Vol. II. p. 277.

The preceding selections have all been taken from the discourses of Elias Hicks.

Edward Hicks, at the Green-street meeting, says, "I ask then the question, how did he [Jesus Christ] leave the bosom of his Father? Can we form no other idea than that of a corporeal being; leaving a located place, somewhere above the clouds, and coming down to this earth? Is this the coming into the world that is meant? I want us to go deeper—to come to the spirituality of these things, and to recognise a spiritual saviour, rather than an outward and corporeal one. Because it is only a spiritual one that can save us from sin. That animal body that appeared at Jerusalem, had its use and day, but the spirit that was clothed upon by the fulness of divine power, this was the Saviour—this is the Saviour to whom I look for salvation, and not by any means to any thing outward or corporeal." Quaker, Vol. II. p. 151.

This declaration corresponds with others which we have quoted, and is a virtual denial that Jesus Christ who appeared at Jerusalem, is the Saviour of men. The term animal body, used to designate our Lord, is irreverent, and unbecoming a creature dependent upon him for salvation.

The Berean says, "We read that the word was in the beginning with God, and was God; and respecting the Son we read, this day have I begotten thee; before this day then the Son could not have existed. How therefore is the Son from everlasting?" Vol. I. p. 296.

"In what manner then, or by what means was he made more than man? I answer by the same means, and in the same manner, that every other righteous undefiled man is raised above the mere human character; that is to say, by the power and spirit of God the Father." Vol. II, p. 258.

"Will it be presumed, that God, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, whose presence fills the whole universe, abode in his fulness literally in the man Jesus? Can it be supposed, that he of whom it is declared that he was limited in knowledge, power, and action, possessed absolutely the spirit of God without measure? I BELIEVE NOT." Ibid. p. 259.

"He was but an instrument and servant of God, but more dignified and glorious than any other that had ever appeared in the world." Ibid.

" The Christ then which it concerns us to have an interest in, is not that outward manifestation which was limited in its operations to a small province—a single nation, and to this day known only by history to a few," &c. Ibid. Vol. II. p. 21.

" But the manifestation to us is inward, and they [primitive friends] believe that it is the Christ within, and not the Christ without, on which is founded their hope of glory." Vol. II. p. 84.

In his attack upon the " Doctrines of Friends" the Berean says, " The doctrine therefore contained in the chapter under review, ascribing a proper divinity to Jesus Christ, making him 'the foundation of every Christian doctrine,' asserting that 'the divine nature essentially belonged to him,' and constituting him a distinct* object of faith and worship, is not only anti-scriptural, but opposed to the simplest principles of reason; and is in short AMONG THE DARKEST DOCTRINES THAT HAS EVER BEEN INTRODUCED INTO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH." Vol. II. p. 259.

We are not left to conjecture the opinions of those who have separated from us, respecting our Lord Jesus Christ, nor to draw our conclusions from a few isolated expressions; their views upon the subject are delivered in unequivocal terms, and are diffused through most of their discourses and writings. By the extracts we have made from the discourses of Elias Hicks and the doctrinal publications of the Separatists, it is plain that they directly assert, that it is impossible for spirit to beget a material body—that they cannot suppose that the body of Jesus Christ was begotten of God—that before the day in which it was declared, I have begotten thee, the Son of God could not have existed—that nothing visible can be a Son of God—that he had no more light given him than would enable him to fulfil the law, the same as the other Israelites—that he was but an instrument and servant of God—that he was raised above the mere human character by the same means, and in the same manner, that every other righteous man is—that he was put upon a level with us—that God who is equal and righteous in all his ways, never can set him above us, because if he did he would be partial—that Christ was the Saviour of Jesus Christ—that we need not say that it is his spirit, but only that it is the same spirit, a portion of which was in him—that we come up into an equality with him—that Jesus could do no more than to recommend to the Comforter—that when he had done this, he had done his office—that he never directed to himself—that he was only an outward saviour, a figure of the Comforter—it was the soul that wanted salvation, but this no outward Saviour could do, no external Saviour could have any hand in it—that Jesus Christ was not the hope of glory—that it is not that outward manifestation which it concerns us to have an interest in—that to suppose that all the fulness of God was in Christ, is to take him out of every other part of the world—that it is declared he was limited in knowledge, power, and action—that they believe not that he possessed the spirit of God without measure—that he was not God

* NOTE.—" The reader is requested to take notice that the word DISTINCT is not used by me in the case to which it is here, and in several other places, applied by the Berean." E. Bates's Reply.

—that we may have access to God without any mediator—and lastly, that ascribing a proper divinity to Jesus Christ, making him the foundation of every Christian doctrine, and asserting that the divine nature essentially belonged to him, is among the darkest doctrines that have ever been introduced into the Christian church.

On the offering of our Lord upon the cross as a sacrifice for sin, Elias Hicks remarks, “ But I do not consider that the crucifixion of the outward body of flesh and blood of Jesus on the cross, *was an atonement for any sins but the legal sins of the Jews,*” &c.—“ Surely, is it possible that any rational being that has any right sense of justice or mercy, that would be willing to accept forgiveness of his sins on such terms !! Would he not rather go forward and offer himself wholly up to suffer all the penalties due to his crimes, rather than the innocent should suffer ? Nay, was he so hardy as to acknowledge a willingness to be saved through such a medium, would it not prove that he stood in direct opposition to every principle of justice and honesty, of mercy and love, and show himself to be a poor selfish creature, and unworthy of notice !!! ” Elias Hicks’ letter to N. Shoemaker.

He further says, “ Did Jesus Christ the Saviour ever have any material blood ? Not a drop of it, my friends, not a drop of it. That blood which cleanseth from all sin, was the life of the soul of Jesus.” Quaker, vol. I. p. 41.

“ And there is nothing but a surrender of our own will, that can make atonement for our sins.” Ibid. p. 196.

“ Nothing can atone for sin but that which induced us to sin.” Vol. II. p. 271.

“ And what are we to do ? We are to give up this life [our will] to suffer and die upon the cross ; for this is the atonement for all our sins.” Ibid. p. 272.

At the Green-street meeting Edward Hicks says, “ His work, he [Jesus Christ] declared to be finished previous to his being crucified in that outward body. Therefore, what must we suppose will become of the doctrine so generally received in the Christian world, that one of the main purposes of his mission was for him to suffer in that outward body without the gates of Jerusalem, as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole world ? Here is a difficulty ; for he positively declares that he had glorified his Father, and finished the work that the Father had given him to do. Now, it must follow as a rational and clear conclusion, to every intelligent mind, that he must have told the truth or an untruth. If he told the truth, then he had finished the work which his heavenly Father had given him to do ; and if he told an untruth, the work must have been yet to do. But I am not disposed to believe this. I do believe in the truth of the emphatic testimony of the Saviour himself, I have finished the work, and, therefore, that his sufferings in the outward body were never incorporated in the original design of the blessed Saviour’s coming into the world.” Quaker, vol. II. p. 162.

“ But, my friends, the inward suffering of the immortal soul is infinitely superior to all outward sufferings. And if sin is atoned for in our souls, it will require a sacrifice proportionable to that which is to

be benefited by it. So that, I apprehend, under this spiritual dispensation and day of light, there must be a *spiritual and inward sacrifice for our sins.*" Ibid. p. 163.

The Berean says, "Whatever redemption, therefore, was effected by the outward flesh and blood of Christ, *it could not, in the nature of things, be any thing else than an outward redemption.*" Vol. II. p. 52.

"And have we not reason to hope, that the day is not far distant, when the *absurd and pernicious idea*, that the imputed righteousness of another, is the ground of our acceptance with God, will be found but in the pages of the historian, when tracing the fruits of that lamented apostacy which early overtook Christendom." Ibid. p. 333.

By these extracts we may perceive that Elias Hicks and his adherents deny the propitiatory sacrifice of our blessed Saviour upon the cross for the sins of the whole world, and consider that a willingness to be saved through such a medium is in direct opposition to every principle of justice and honesty, of mercy and love, and betrays a poor selfish disposition, unworthy of notice. They believe that his sufferings in the outward body were never incorporated in the original design of his coming into the world—that whatever redemption was effected by those sufferings, it was only an outward redemption, and confined exclusively to the legal sins of the Jews; and, in their opinion, the sacrifice of the will is the only atonement for all the sins now committed—that nothing can atone for sin, but that which induced us to sin. This doctrine, as it is contrary to the Holy Scriptures, so it is not, and never was, the faith of the Society of Friends. We believe, that nothing man can do, or suffer, will atone for, or cancel his sins. They are remitted by the mercy of God, through Christ Jesus our Lord, for the sake of the sufferings and death of Christ, and it is the power and efficacy of that propitiatory offering, *upon faith and repentance*, that justifies both Jews and Gentiles from the sins that are past; and it is the power of Christ's spirit in our hearts, that purifies and makes us acceptable before God. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii. 24 to 26. "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being *now justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, *when we were enemies*, we were reconciled to God *by the death of his Son*, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom we have now received the atonement.*" Rom. v. 8 to 11.

Not only do the Separatists deny the universal efficacy of the offering of our Lord, and term the imputation of his righteousness as the ground of our acceptance, a pernicious and absurd idea, but they appear to rejoice in the hope, that the doctrine will be discarded, as the fruit of the apostacy from the Christian faith. Believing, as we do, that it is only as we come to be divested of our own righteousness, and

of all confidence in it, and through divine mercy clothed upon with the righteousness of Christ, that any can have a firm ground whereon to rest their hope of salvation, we sincerely deplore the delusion of those, who thus wantonly deprive themselves of that hope, which maketh not ashamed, and entereth within the veil.

We think that every candid dispassionate inquirer after truth, who sincerely believes the testimony of the Sacred Records, must be convinced that many of the passages which we have quoted from the discourses of Elias Hicks, and the periodical works of the Separatists, inculcate doctrines of infidelity—that they do deny the divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the universal efficacy of his most satisfactory sacrifice for sin without the gates of Jerusalem, and also undervalue, and tend to destroy all confidence in the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Such doctrines, we feel it an incumbent duty, to pronounce to be unsound and antichristian, and contrary to the faith which we have always held and promulgated to the world, ever since we have been a people.

For we have always professed and sincerely believed, that our Lord Jesus Christ was miraculously conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary—that God gave not the spirit by measure unto him, but that all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, and of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace—that he was given for God's salvation to the ends of the earth, for Gentiles as well as Jews, and that no man cometh unto the Father but by him—that he was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, the prince of this world having no part in him—that he wrought many mighty miracles—that he bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness—that he laid down his life for the sheep, that he by the grace of God, should taste death for every man; and he is therefore the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world—that he was buried in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, rose again from the dead the third day, and his body saw ne corruption—that he discovered himself to his disciples for the space of forty days, ascended up on high, and now sitteth at the right hand of God, our glorious Mediator, Intercessor, and Advocate with the Father. He is that living, eternal Word, that was in the beginning with God, and was God; by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. He is now come in spirit, and by his divine light with which he enlightens every man that cometh into the world, he manifests and reprobates for sin, and as he is obeyed, purifies the heart, and completes the work of sanctification and justification; and thus prepares the soul to receive that crown of everlasting glory, which he will give to all them that love and serve him in sincerity and truth.

This has been our religious belief from the rise of the Society to the present day, in confirmation of which we shall adduce some testimonies from the writings of Friends, given forth at different periods.

George Fox, in a paper which he wrote, says: "Christ took upon him the seed of Abraham; he doth not say the corrupt seed of the Gentiles; so according to the flesh, he was of the Holy seed of Abraham and David; and his *holy body and blood* was an *offering* and a *sacrifice* for the sins of the whole world, as a lamb without blemish, whose flesh saw no corruption. By the one offering of himself, in the new testament or new covenant, he has put an end to all the offerings and sacrifices amongst the Jews in the old testament. Christ the holy Seed, was crucified, dead, and buried, according to the flesh, and raised again the third day, and his flesh saw no corruption. Though he was crucified in the flesh, yet quickened again by the Spirit, and is alive and liveth for evermore, and hath all power in heaven and in earth given to him, and reigneth over all, and is the one Mediator between God and man, even the man Christ Jesus." Vol. II. p. 384.

In an essay entitled the royal law of God revived, he also says, "And further saith the apostle in 1 John i. 1, 2, 'We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.' Now mark, this is a large word for all people to take notice of, that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Therefore every one of you in your own particulars, know this, that Christ Jesus, who is crowned with glory and honour, *did taste death for every man*; mark, for *every man*; and **WHOSOEVER DENIES THIS DOCTRINE IS AN ANTICHRIST; AND PREACHES ANOTHER, IS A FALSE PREACHER AND SEDUCER, AND BRINGS PEOPLE TO TROUBLE AND LOSS FROM THAT WHICH IS RIGHT AND THEIR DUE, IN WHICH IS THEIR SATISFACTION.** So these are universal things to all mankind, whereby all mankind might come out of the earthly old Adam, in the fall and transgression, to Him that hath died for them all, and purchased them all; and tasted death for all, and enlighteneth them all, and gave his grace to them all; and he willetteth that all might be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth of Christ, who doth this. And whoever teacheth another doctrine, *brings people into sects and confusions*, to destroy one another, where they have not natural affections, and will do that to another which they would not have others do unto them, who *break the bonds thereby of civil commerce amongst mankind*; and the religions, ways, and worships of all such, are no worships, religions, nor ways to God, but **SET UP BY A DARK PEEVISH SPIRIT**, by which they destroy one another, which are God's creatures, about them: all which come from him who is out of the truth, whom Christ came to destroy." p. 19.

In his answer to all such as falsely say, the Quakers are no Christians, he has this declaration: "We believe concerning God the Father, Son and Spirit, according to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, which we receive and embrace as the most authentic and perfect declaration of Christian faith, being indited by the holy Spirit of God, that never errs; 1st, that there is one God and Father, of whom are all things; 2ndly, that there is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom all things were made, John i. and xvii. Rom. ix. who was glorified with the Father before the world began, who is God over all, blessed for ever; John xiv. That there is one Holy Spirit, the promise of the

Father and the Son, and leader, and sanctifier, and comforter of his people, 1 John, v. And we further believe, as the Holy Scriptures soundly and sufficiently express, that these three are one, even the Father, the Word and Spirit." p. 27.

Robert Barclay, in his *Apology*, says, " For the infinite and most wise God, who is the foundation, root and spring of all operation, hath wrought all things by his eternal Word and Son. This is that Word that was in the beginning with God and was God, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made that was made. This is that Jesus Christ, by whom God created all things, by whom and for whom all things were created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, Col. i. 16. who, therefore, is called the First born of every creature, ver. 15. As, then, that infinite and incomprehensible Fountain of life and motion, ~~and~~ ^{and} operation, in the creation, by his own eternal word and power, so no creature has access again unto him, but *in* and *by the Son*; according to his own express words, no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him, Matt. xi. 27. Luke x. 22. And again, he himself saith, *I am the way, the truth and the life*; no man cometh unto the Father *but by me*, John xiv. 6. Hence he is fitly called the Mediator betwixt God and man; for, having been with God from all eternity, *BEING HIMSELF GOD*, and also, in time, *partaking of the nature of man*, through him is the goodness and love of God conveyed to mankind, and by him again man receiveth and partaketh of these mercies." *Apology*, p. 41.

William Penn, in "A serious apology for the principles and practices of the Quakers," has this concise confession of Faith: " We do believe in one only Holy God Almighty, who is an eternal Spirit, the Creator of all things. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, his only Son and express image of his substance; who took upon him flesh, and was in the world, and in life, doctrine, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension and mediation, perfectly did, and does continue to do, THE WILL OF GOD; to whose holy *life, power, mediation and blood*, we *only* ascribe our sanctification, justification, redemption, and perfect salvation. And we believe in one holy Spirit, that proceeds and breathes from the Father and the Son, as the life and virtue of both the Father and the Son; a *measure* of which is given to all to profit with; and he that has one has all, for those three are one, who is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, God over all, blessed for ever, amen." Vol. II. p. 66.

In his " Primitive Christianity Revived," William Penn declares— " We do believe that Jesus Christ *was* our holy sacrifice, atonement and propitiation; that he bore our iniquities, and that by his stripes we *were* healed of the wounds *Adam gave us in his fall*; and that God is just in forgiving *true penitents* upon the credit of that holy offering Christ made of himself to God for us; and that what he did and suffered, satisfied and pleased God, and was for the sake of fallen man, that had displeased God; and that through the offering up of himself once for all, through the Eternal Spirit, he hath for ever perfected those (IN ALL TIMES) that were sanctified, who walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. viii. 1. Mark that." Vol. II. p. 867.

Richard Clarendon on justification says ; " In a word, if justification be considered in its full and just latitude, neither Christ's work without us, in the prepared body, nor his work within us, by his Holy Spirit, are to be excluded ; for both have their place and service in our complete and absolute justification. By the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ without us, we, truly repenting and believing, are, through the mercy of God, justified from the imputations of sins and transgressions that are past, as though they had never been committed ; and by the mighty work of Christ within us, the power, nature, and habits of sin are destroyed ; that as sin once reigned unto death, even so now grace reigneth, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. And all this is effected, not by a bare or naked act of faith, separate from obedience, but in the obedience of faith ; Christ being the author of eternal salvation to none but those that obey him." p. 79.

The Society of Friends published a declaration of its faith in the year 1693, from which we extract the following : " We sincerely profess faith in God, by his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, as being our light and life, our only way to the Father, and also our only Mediator and Advocate with the Father. That God created all things, he made the worlds, by his Son Jesus Christ, he being that powerful and living Word of God, by whom all things were made ; and that the Father, the Word and Holy Spirit are one, in divine being inseparable, one true, living and eternal God, blessed for ever. Yet that this Word, or Son of God, in the fulness of time, took flesh, became perfect man, according to the flesh, descended and came of the seed of Abraham and David, but was miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary ; and also further declared powerfully to be the Son of God, according to the spirit of sanctification by the resurrection from the dead."

" That in the Word, or Son of God, was life, and the same life was the light of men ; and that he was that true light which enlightens every man coming into the world ; and, therefore, that men are to believe in the light, that they may become the children of the light. Hereby we believe in Christ the Son of God, as he is the light and life within us ; and wherein we must needs have sincere respect, and honour to, and belief in, Christ, as in his own unapproachable and incomprehensible glory and fulness, as he is the fountain of life and light, and giver thereof unto us ; Christ as in himself, and as in us, being not divided."

" That as man, Christ died for our sins, rose again, and was received up into glory in the heavens ; he having, in his dying for all, been that *one great, universal offering and sacrifice* for peace, atonement, and reconciliation between God and man, and he is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. We were reconciled by his death, but saved by his life."

" That Jesus Christ, who sitteth at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, yet he is our king, high priest and prophet in his church, a minister of the Sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man. He is intercessor and advocate with the Father in heaven, and there appearing in the presence of God for us, being touched with the feeling of our infirmities, sufferings and sorrows. And also by his spirit in our

hearts, he maketh intercession according to the will of God, crying, 'Abba, Father.'

"That the gospel of the grace of God should be preached in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, being one in power, wisdom and goodness, and indivisible, or not to be divided in the great work of man's salvation."

"We sincerely confess and believe in Jesus Christ, both as he is true God, and perfect man; and that he is the author of our living faith in the power and goodness of God, as manifested in his son Jesus Christ, and by his own blessed spirit or divine unction revealed in us, whereby we inwardly feel and taste of his goodness, life and virtue; so as our souls live and prosper by and in him; and the inward sense of this divine power of Christ, and faith in the same, and this inward experience, is absolutely necessary to make a true, sincere, and perfect Christian in spirit and life."

"That divine honour and worship is due to the Son of God; and that he is in true faith to be prayed unto, and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ called upon, as the primitive Christians did, because of the glorious union or oneness of the Father and the Son; and that we cannot acceptably offer up prayers and praises to God, nor receive a gracious answer, or blessing from God, but in and through his dear Son Christ." See Sewall's History, p. 499.

Besides the palpable errors we have enumerated, Elias Hicks and his adherents deny that mankind sustain any loss through the fall of Adam,* asserting that children come into the world precisely in the condition he did.* They also deny the existence of any evil spirit by which man is tempted, distinct from his own propensities.† "Heaven," they say, "is a state, and not a place by any means."‡ "Belief," with them, "is no virtue, and unbelief no crime;"§ and however at times they may make high pretensions to the divine light, it is evident that the guide which they follow is their own benighted reason.

Elias Hicks says, "In those things which relate to our moral conduct, we all have understandings alike, as reasonable beings; and we know when we do wrong to our fellow creatures; we know it *by our rational understanding—WE WANT NO OTHER INSPIRATION THAN REASON AND JUSTICE.*" Again: "If we *transgress against God*, or even against our fellow creatures, the *act* hath its *adequate reward*, and it will make us sorry for what we have done—that is, we shall be losers by it, and gain nothing, for no man shall gain by doing evil." "He [the Almighty] has set good and evil before us, and *left us to elect for ourselves.*" Quaker, vol. II. pp. 258—9.

As regards morality, they want no other revelation than reason and justice, and when we transgress against God, the *act* will make us sorry for what we have done, that is, we shall be losers, and gain nothing. While they speak much of the necessity of divine revelation, reason is held up as the "balancing and comparing principle," by which we are to test those revelations, and decide whether they are "imprudent," or "counterfeit."|| A simple and child-like reliance

* See Quaker, 1 vol. p. 183. and Phil. Ser. p. 66. † Phil. Ser. p. 163. 166. 257, 258. ‡ N. Y. Ser. p. 93. § Quaker, 1 vol. p. 146. || N. Y. and Phil. Ser. p. 90. 13. 208. ||

upon that *faith* which is of the operation of the Holy Spirit of God is thus disregarded, and the proud reason of man exalted into the seat of judgment. We need not therefore be surprised at the unsound opinions which they entertain, the contemptuous manner in which they treat the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, contained in the scriptures of Truth, and the very irreverent and unworthy sentiments respecting the blessed Saviour and Redeemer of men, with which their discourses and writings abound, as if it were a chief object, to decry the Holy Scriptures, and to degrade the Lord of life and glory.

The contrast between the christian principles of our religious Society, and those held by the Separatists, who have adopted the anti-scriptural sentiments of Elias Hicks, must be strikingly obvious to every unprejudiced mind. The sorrowful effects of these principles in deranging the order and subordination necessary to the well-being of our religious Society, the disunity and discord produced by them in meetings and in families, have been very fully developed in the last five years, not only within the limits of this Yearly meeting, but also in many other parts. We believe it right to bear our decided testimony against such principles, as tending to destroy all faith in the fundamental doctrines of the christian religion, and to break asunder the bands of civil and religious society. And we further declare, that as such who entertain and propagate them, have departed from the teachings of the Holy Spirit, which would have preserved them in the doctrines of Christ Jesus and his apostles, we cannot unite with them in church fellowship, nor own them to be of our communion ; neither can we correspond with any meetings or associations, holding those principles, and set up in violation of the excellent order, which has been instituted among us in the unfoldings of Divine wisdom. While we believe it to be a religious duty, thus to stand forth in the defence of the gospel of Christ, against the spirit and principles of libertinism and infidelity, we have no doubt, that many who have joined in the present schism, have been led into it by the influence of misrepresentation and unfounded prejudice against their brethren, and without a full knowledge of the principles of their leaders. For such as these, we feel deep regret and tender solicitude : and it is our fervent desire for them, and for all others who have departed from the right way of the Lord, that he may be pleased to renew the visitations of his love and light to their souls, and in his own time, gather them to the fold of Christ's sheep, where they may go in and out, and find pasture.

In contemplating the merciful extension of Divine help with which Friends have been favoured from time to time, enabling them to endure many close conflicts, and to stand fast in the support of our Christian principles and discipline, we desire to commemorate the Lord's goodness, and to place our confidence in him alone, firmly believing, that as this becomes the living concern of the members of our religious Society generally, he will more and more exalt and glorify the name of his beloved Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in and amongst us ; to whom with the Father be ascribed all honour and praise now and for ever. Amen.

Signed by direction and on behalf of the Yearly meeting,
SAMUEL BETTLE, Clerk.

NARRATIVE
OF
FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES
THAT HAVE TENDED TO PRODUCE A SECESSION FROM
THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,
IN
NEW-ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING.

PROVIDENCE:
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1845.
KC

NARRATIVE.

It is for the cause of truth, and for the information of those who from the want of a true understanding of the case, are liable to be deceived by unfounded and improper representations, that we feel called upon to set forth the following account of the secession from Friends, that has taken place within this Yearly Meeting.

In order to give a faithful history, it seems necessary to go back several years, and advert to some circumstances that then transpired; and unpleasant as is the duty, we are subjected to the painful necessity of exposing the course of an individual, formerly a minister in unity with us, who has been prominent as a leader in this schism, and, for the same reason, we are induced to state various other causes and circumstances that have tended to produce the secession which we are about to describe.

In the year 1832, John Wilbur was liberated to make a religious visit to Friends in Great Britain and Ireland. While absent on this visit, he wrote a series of Letters relating to the doctrines and practices of the Society of Friends, which were published, having evidently been

written for that purpose, without being submitted to the inspection of any body of the Society authorized to examine such publications ; a procedure which he well knew was viewed by our Yearly Meeting as always improper, and contrary to the express provisions of our Discipline. As this publication was made but a short time before his return home, no action was taken in the case until he arrived ; when the Meeting for Sufferings, feeling that a dangerous precedent had been set by a Minister, and former member of their body, thought some explanation was called for from him ; and they named a committee of three Friends to have an interview with him on the subject ; but that there might be no unnecessary exposure, no minute was made in the case. This committee sought an interview with him, and labored in tenderness and love to convince him of the impropriety of departing from the Discipline of his own Yearly Meeting, while traveling as a Minister with the requisite certificates of that Meeting, as well as of the hurtful tendency in an abstract point of view, of encouraging publications on doctrinal subjects, without the previous investigation and approbation of some authorized body of the Society. But so far from giving any satisfaction to this committee, he manifested a disposition to justify himself, and to call in question the correctness of the procedure of the Meeting for Sufferings in the case. After considerable delay and much ineffectual labour, as the publication had received but little circulation in this country, and as a desire was felt to exercise all tenderness and forbearance towards him, the subject was suffered to rest, so far as any official action was concerned. But we have reason to believe that this honest concern, and faithful labour in the case by his brethren, was not received by him in the spirit in which they were offered. A want of that charity, unity and love, which so become brethren, was painfully observable in his conduct towards many.

Friends, so as to cause uneasiness on his account, and to induce individual labor to be extended to him.

It was under the profession of supporting sound doctrines, that he pursued a course, and indulged in a spirit of detraction, tending to injure the religious character of divers Friends in our own and other Yearly Meetings, representing them as unsound in doctrine, and holding views inconsistent with those always held by the Society of Friends. Letters were written and circulated by him having this end in view, and intended to lessen the standing of individuals, and to obstruct their religious labours.

In the autumn of 1837, John Wilbur made a religious visit within the limits of New-York Yearly Meeting; and during the course of this journey he continued to indulge in this detracting spirit, both in speaking and writing, until he produced much exercise with well-concerned Friends,—Ministers, Elders, and others,—among whom he was traveling, and some of them treated with him on this account. In one of the conferences held with him upon this subject, he used the following language: “I consider the course I am taking in respect to the Friend from England and his writings, to be in the line of my religious duty, and this I hold to be more binding upon me than any rules of Discipline.”

After his return home from this visit, he continued to manifest the same unwarrantable course; producing much uneasiness in the minds of those friends to whom knowledge of it came, and who felt the importance both of supporting our own Discipline, and of treating other Yearly Meetings with that christian confidence and regard to which as bodies in unity with us they were justly entitled, and tender labor was bestowed on him by different individuals, to induce him to desist from his improper proceedings.

In the 7th month, 1839, a minister and aged elder

sought an interview with him, the progress and result of which are thus described by the latter:

"The manner in which John Wilbur had spoken of a Friend, when about to visit this country as a minister, having the approbation of his friends at home, and by them liberated in the usual way, gave some of his friends concern on his account; and after the friend arrived in this country, John Wilbur being then out on a religious visit to Friends in some parts of the State of New-York, continued to manifest his aversion to the friend and to his writings, as I understood. In the course of the following summer, I believe in the 7th month, a friend from New-Hampshire called on me to accompany him on a religious visit to the meetings of Friends in South Kingstown Monthly Meeting. I bore him company; and after having dined at John Wilbur's, we asked for a personal and select interview with him; this was readily granted, and the subject of the good order of the Society in reference to the manner in which ministers traveling abroad on religious concerns, in the authority of the Church, ought to treat each other, was brought into view, and contrasted with the course he had pursued while out on a religious visit to Friends in the State of New-York. We endeavored to convince him that his manner of treating the friend above referred to, both in speaking and writing respecting him, was not only contrary to the express scriptural injunction of doing to others as we would that others should do to us, but was likewise contrary to the injunction of our own Discipline. He appeared disposed, and repeatedly attempted to shield himself by alleging that the writings of the friend were unsound. We as often unhesitatingly assured him, that our concern to have an interview with him had no reference to writings, but that our object was to persuade him to refrain from pursuing such a course. The friend was here, recommended to us by a meeting with which we were in unity; should he advance any thing unsound in public or in private, or otherwise conduct himself disorderly, he would become a subject, like all other ministers traveling among us, over whom the care of the Society ought to be extended.

The conversation was open and free, and he was repeatedly enjoined not to blend our concern for him as

having any connection with, or reference to the writings of the friend. And we again assured him that it was a concern growing out of, as we believed, a clear conviction in our own minds that his past course in reference to that individual, would ultimately, if persisted in, be productive of serious loss to himself and injury to the Society.

It may not be improper here to remark, that I did not converse with an individual member of South Kingstown Monthly Meeting on the subject, that did not manifest regret at the manner J. W. was conducting towards the minister referred to."

In the following winter, 1839-40, John Wilbur having obtained a certificate from South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, to enable him to visit some of the meetings in this Yearly Meeting, a committee then under appointment from the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, were tenderly concerned on his account, and a few of their number were deputed to have an interview with him previous to his leaving home to enter on this engagement; but failing to effect their object, they addressed to him the following communication, through one of their number. The letter is dated 1 mo. 6, 1840.

"Having written thee a few days ago, and forwarded it by mail, at the request of some of the Select Yearly Meeting's committee, proposing an interview with thee at our house on the fifth inst., the few friends referred to came at the time appointed, but as thou wast not present,—which we readily admitted may have been occasioned by reasonable causes—it was proposed that I should again address a few lines to thee, pointing out in some measure the subjects of concern that induced the committee of the Select Yearly Meeting, assembled from various parts of the Yearly Meeting—twelve in number—to seek an interview with thyself as proposed, and named a few friends for this purpose. Such an interview was more desirable than correspondence, and would probably have been further attempted, but from uncertainty of thy being at home, and from the expectation of those friends that were here, of leaving their several homes to-day or to-morrow, to go in a different direction.

"I feel it to be a very delicate situation to be placed in, that of being the instrument to convey the religious impressions and views of the Committee; and probably I should have at once excused myself, had not the committee named me as one of those who were requested to have such interview. If I should be found incorrect, my apology to them and thyself must be, that I was not present with the committee in their deliberations, and have not rightly comprehended their concern; but as I understand the subject, the committee in taking into consideration the state of the Ministers and Elders in this Yearly Meeting, and the duties that devolve upon them as members of the Select Yearly Meeting's Committee, became tenderly regardful of thyself, knowing that thou hadst been liberated by thy Monthly Meeting for the purpose of visiting the Quarterly Meetings, and that thou hadst commenced the fulfilment of thy prospect. And trusting that thou wilt kindly receive the manifestations of their tender regard for thy welfare and that of the church, in bringing into view in this way, a portion of ancient Discipline to which we doubt not thy own judgment and religious experience will readily assent—'That ministers be very tender of one another's reputation, neither giving ear to, nor spreading reports, tending to raise in the minds of others a lessening or disesteem of any of the brotherhood. That by circumspect walking in all holiness of life and conversation, they may become living examples of the purity and excellence of the advices they recommend.' This advice was intended, no doubt, for all practically to regard, and it appears to have specially in view those traveling in the ministry; and, I understand the committee felt themselves constrained in Christian love to bring this subject before thy view at the present time, from a persuasion that in time past there had not been that circumspection and care on thy part, which are the fruits of that charity that is the Christian's ornament, and the bond of our religious communion; in that as they believe thou hast indulged thyself, and countenanced in others, both in conversation and writing, the saying of many things tending to close up the way in Friends' minds to the reception of the labors of one who like thyself apprehends that he has a religious duty to discharge, and in the order of Society is endeavoring to accomplish

this object. And I am requested to add as the united concern of the committee, and as their advice, that if thou shouldest pursue thy prospect of visiting the Quarterly Meetings, that, for thy own preservation and the harmony and good order of Society, thou wilt be careful to refrain from introducing the subject to any with whom thou mayst associate, and will not open the way for others to introduce it. The committee likewise recommend thy omitting to take with thee any of thy correspondence, either written or printed, relating to the individual alluded to. And the Committee were also united in prospect that thou wouldest not be traveling in that unity of the body, so essential to the preservation of Christian fellowship, until thou mayst give evidence of thy intention to regard this advice. I was likewise requested to bring into thy view in a tender and affectionate manner, the suspension for the present of thy visit, if it may be done consistently with thy own apprehensions of religious duty.

I have thus endeavored to discharge the duties assigned me according to my understanding, although I am aware of its being far short of producing that mutual interest which a personal interview would have produced, yet I trust thou wilt give the subject referred to, due place in thy mind, and justly appreciate the interest manifested by the Committee for thy welfare and that of the Church."

Notwithstanding the counsel thus offered him, he proceeded on his journey; and from testimonies which we have received, it appears that the advice thus feelingly given and intended for his own preservation, and the good of the Church, was disregarded by him.

In the 5th month, 1840, in consequence of deficiencies in the answers from subordinate meetings, and "under a concern for the cause of Truth," Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders appointed a committee "to visit subordinate meetings and individuals as way may open for, and occasion may require, and to labor for the restoration and preservation of harmony amongst us."

The Committee thus appointed, obtained an early interview with John Wilbur, and stated to him the vari-

ous causes of uneasiness on his account. He was reminded of his improper course in relation to divers friends of our own and other Yearly Meetings, whom he had represented as unsound in religious faith ; and that ministers, elders, and other friends were departing from the ancient views of our Society in relation to Baptism, the Supper, &c., producing in many instances a totally unfounded prejudice against those friends : that he had spoken of a division of the Yearly Meeting as being a probable result, soon to take place. He did not deny these charges, but plead in justification the alledged unsoundness of certain writings of a Friend traveling as a Minister amongst us, and offered a paper purporting to contain extracts from these writings, to prove his position. To this the committee entirely objected, as not being the matter at issue ; doctrines not being at all in question ; but the support of Christian order and the Discipline of the Yearly Meeting. When inquired of if he knew of an individual amongst us who had imbibed unsound principles, he objected to the question ; and when pressed for an answer, in consequence of his having circulated such statements, he absolutely declined to give it. His improper course, and the injurious effects resulting therefrom to various friends, and above all to the precious cause of Truth, were fully unfolded to him ; but after a full conference, in which much brotherly admonition and advice were bestowed upon him, the opportunity terminated without the Committee's receiving any satisfaction from him.

In the 4th month of this year, (1840,) a Minister from a distant Yearly Meeting traveling amongst us on a religious visit, with his companion, put up at John Wilbur's house in the course of their journey, soon after their arrival within our limits. To these friends John Wilbur spoke very freely of many members of Society among whom they would probably pass in pursuance of their

prospect of religious service, and did not hesitate to name various individuals, ministers and others, designating them as unsound, and warning these friends not to go to their houses or to use freedom with them. Before leaving this part of the country, and soon after the occurrence of the Quarterly Meeting, these friends believed it to be their religious duty to call together the Select Quarterly Meeting's Committee and to inform them of the communications made to them by John Wilbur, in order that proper care might be extended to him, as his observations about individuals had been very burdensome to them and had much tended to embarrass them in their religious service. A letter from the companion of the friend above alluded to, written after his return home, to a member of the committee, will serve to show something of the nature of these communications. We make from it the following extracts:

"When we first arrived within the limits of your Yearly Meeting, we fell in with John Wilbur, who kindly entertained us at his house, excepting that we found him, as both of us thought, much soured against many friends. He spoke freely of the unsoundness of a minister from England, who was at that time engaged in a religious visit to Friends in America, exhibiting a long list of written charges against him. He also told us he was, and would be supported by your Yearly Meeting, on account of a like unsoundness in many of its members.

"It had been our prospect, on entering the limits of your Yearly Meeting, to proceed early to Providence, though nothing definite had been settled upon; but John Wilbur proposed a different route, in which he said we could attend more Quarterly Meetings, and that he would accompany us as far as Newport. Wishing to attend as many Quarterly Meetings as we could, and being dependent upon our friends for conveyance, we accepted his proposal, and were thus thrown into his company and the company of such friends as he introduced us to, for a considerable time; and hence arose as thou knowest, (and not without some grounds,) a fear on our account in the

minds of many of our dear friends in your Yearly Meeting, which led *me*, and I think I may say *us*, on thy kindly letting us know that such was the case, to believe it necessary for the opening of our way, if for no other cause, to let Friends know that we did not believe with John Wilbur, on many points, and that we were not insensible of the spirit which he indulged towards Friends. This, together with the fact of our knowledge of the danger to which he was exposing both himself and others, may account for our divulging to thee and to other friends of a committee of your Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, sentiments expressed by him.

"In addition to what has been already related, he spoke of a controlling influence in your Yearly Meeting that was not a religious, but a moneyed one, and that if we were not on our guard, they would buy us—that they had already got T. and E. R., from England. On our inquiring about two ministers, who we said were accounted sound friends, and were much beloved when in our country, he said, as nearly as I now remember, that they were once such, low, humble minded friends, but that they had now got to Providence, and were bought over to the same influence. He also said something about their aged parent being distressed about them. He told us too of a friend of New-Hampshire being bought over, telling the particulars, but I cannot now remember them. He spoke freely and unreservedly of a division in your Yearly Meeting, which he believed must and would take place. I remember that on my saying that I did not think it would, he remarked I was as one of Job's comforters, for you could not live as you were. He appeared to me to be looking to no other alternative than a division, for an improvement in your condition. I have but little doubt that to nearly all the foregoing facts, there are many friends in your parts that could, if they would, bear ample testimony."

About three weeks after the interview of the Select Quarterly Meeting's Committee with John Wilbur, a member of the committee received a long and in some points very objectionable letter from him, in which he implies that the committee were treating with him for supporting sound doctrines, and that they themselves

were upholding doctrines which were unsound. The premises taken in this letter, and the conclusions deduced therefrom, were objected to by every member of the committee present at the interview, as uncandid and unjust; and in divers respects untrue in points of fact. This letter now became an additional cause of concern to the committee, and during the time of our Yearly Meeting in the 6th mo. following, several long opportunities of conference were had with him, without his rendering Friends any satisfaction. In the 8th mo. 1840, another interview took place, which was extended to great length, most members of the committee being present, and all united in sentiment, who imparted much affectionate advice, without inducing any favorable result, there being a determination manifested by him to defend himself in his course, and to condemn all those who questioned its correctness; and the interview closed, leaving an impression of regret and sorrow on the minds of the committee. In the 11th mo. he was again unavailingly labored with by the committee at large, and at the conclusion of the interview, a few friends were requested again to see him, who accordingly visited him in the 12th mo., and had an opportunity with him in presence of the select members of his particular meeting; but he continued to justify himself and to condemn Friends.

In the 2d mo. following, the committee again attempted unavailingly to produce a change in his mind, and to induce him to give Friends satisfaction.

The labors of the committee appointed by the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders failing to produce the desired result, they believed it right to submit the case to a committee then under appointment by the Yearly Meeting, for purposes specified in the following minute of their appointment:

“At our Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England, held on Rhode-Island in the 6th mo., 1840, the joint

committee of men and women Friends appointed to visit subordinate meetings and individuals as way might open for, and circumstances in their judgment require, made report of their attention to that service during the past year, and proposed the appointment of a similar committee at the present time, which being deliberately considered, was united with ; and at a subsequent sitting, the following friends being named for that service, were appointed to extend a general care on its behalf, for the maintenance of our Christian principles and testimonies, and the preservation of love and unity among our members ; and in that ability which may be afforded them, to assist and advise such meetings and members as circumstances may require and way open for, under the direction of best wisdom : and they were requested to report to this meeting next year."

Accordingly a number of this committee had an interview with John Wilbur, at East Greenwich, the 4th of 5th mo., 1841. They were fully united in sentiment as to the impropriety of the course pursued by him in the several particulars brought to their notice by the committee of the Select Quarterly Meeting, and they laboured faithfully and affectionately to convince him of his errors, and to endeavor to induce him to give Friends satisfaction. The interview was long continued, and was again renewed next morning, without producing any sensible change in his feelings, or at all reconciling him to Friends.

He contended for the propriety of his course on account of alleged unsoundness in some of the writings of the Minister from England ; while the Committee wholly denied this to be the point at issue ; these printed writings not being at all involved in the case, but the simple question being whether John Wilbur could with impunity violate our Discipline and the Christian order of our religious Society. They stated, among other things, that the friend alluded to, would, while among us, as any one of our own members, be held answerable to, and be judged by our Discipline, for whatever he should ad-

vance. That any action attempted by us, for acts committed, or sentiments advanced, prior to the date of his certificates, would be a virtual transgression of that safe rule of our society at large, which considers members every where, for their conduct while at home, amenable to the meetings to which they belong. This rule appears by the general consent of all the Yearly Meetings to have been heretofore carefully respected. It necessarily supposes but one and the same qualification throughout the Society for the exercise of Christian care over its members ; and consequently any act which should reach within the limits of another Yearly Meeting, intended to arraign one or more of its members for any alleged error of earlier date than that of the certificates they may bring, must be viewed as a breach of the established order amongst us. Such a course would be to judge not of the individual only, but of the meetings that granted the certificates. If this order should be departed from, no one, in a case of real or imputed error, could know the extent of his liability, or the conclusion of the Society, till judged, severally, by every branch of our church.

During this interview, he stated that in his letter to a member of the Select Quarterly Meeting's Committee, he did not intend to charge the Committee with holding unsound doctrines ; and being inquired of whether he was willing to say further that he did not intend to make any reflections upon them injurious to their standing in society, he requested them to commit to paper what they wished him to state.

The Committee adjourned to meet again the following morning, and in the recess the subjoined paper was prepared, with a hope that John Wilbur might be convinced of the propriety of signing it, so as to remove so far as he could now do it, the unjust charges and insinuations brought by him against the Select Quarterly Meeting's Committee.

"Feelings of uneasiness having rested on the minds of the Select Quarterly Meeting's Committee, in consequence of some expressions contained in a letter written by me to one of their number under date of 5th month, 30th, 1840, from an apprehension that I meant therein to charge the members of that Committee with holding unsound doctrines, I feel willing to relieve their minds from such apprehension by now saying that it was not my intention to be so understood. And further I am willing to say that I regret that any thing was so unguardedly expressed in said letter as to bear the construction that I meant to reflect upon said Committee to the prejudice of their standing in society. And having in said letter attributed to that committee expressions that they do not own as having been made by them, I am willing to believe that I misunderstood the sentiments they meant to convey; and consequently to withdraw such charges."

On presenting this essay to him, although as the committee thought it was so worded that he could hardly fail to receive it, especially as he proposed at the previous interview that a paper of this purport should be prepared, he declined to sign it, and the interview ended. On the 13th of 6th month, the committee again met at Newport, agreeably to their adjournment, twenty-seven members being present. A long conference was again held with him, resulting as heretofore. A few friends were separated, affectionately and earnestly to labour with him, and the committee adjourned to the 15th inst. At this adjourned meeting, John Wilbur was not present, and the friends who had by request had an interview with him in the recess of the meetings, now reported that they had not been able to induce him to give Friends satisfaction, but that they thought the case nearly hopeless.

The Yearly Meeting at this time being apprehensive that the existing state of things in the Society still demanded an extension of care from them, continued their committee, with a similar minute to that made in their appointment last year. The committee thus appointed,

met on the 17th, and named four friends to have an interview with John Wilbur, and adjourned to the next morning. On the 18th, they met according to adjournment, 25 members being present.

The original cause of concern on the part of Friends with him was again stated ; his letter to a member of the Select Quarterly Meeting's Committee was read, and also part of a letter from him dated 3d mo. 11th, 1841, to a young friend in Dover Quarterly Meeting, calling upon certain friends to give him the state of things in that quarter. John Wilbur being present, was called upon to reply to the case, if he saw fit ; upon which he made some remarks, but not to much extent, saying he wanted the charges in writing, &c. During this meeting, much tender brotherly counsel and advice, by several of the committee, was bestowed, in order for his restoration to the unity and harmony of friends. On leaving the committee, he said he was willing they should proceed in the case in the manner they thought best, and remarked as he departed from the room, "Friends, do as you please, I have no concessions to make."

Subsequent to this time, the Yearly Meeting's Committee frequently met and solidly considered this sorrowful case, that had produced so much uneasiness, and in relation to which so much patient but ineffectual labor had been bestowed ; and two of the committee were encouraged to visit him again at his own house, and make another effort to convince him of his departures from right order and discipline, and to persuade him to return and be reconciled to Friends. They accordingly waited upon him and spent the night under his roof, and with great tenderness and brotherly regard, entreated him to turn from his course and make those concessions which the cause of truth required. But to this he turned a deaf ear and refused to give any satisfaction.

At the close of South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, in
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11th mo., 1841, John Wilbur called together the select members, and after stating some instances of what he considered encroachments on the privileges of Monthly Meetings, and individuals, all of which had reference to his own case, he desired that the select members might take a firm stand against the measures of the Quarterly Meeting. The proposition being disapproved, was abandoned.

It now appearing fully evident that any attempt at further labor would be unavailing, on the 23d of the 4th mo., 1842, the following statement of the case was prepared and signed by the Yearly Meeting's Committee, and presented to South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, *viz* :

“ We the Committee appointed by the Yearly Meeting to extend a general care on its behalf ‘for the maintenance of our Christian principles and testimonies, and the preservation of love and unity among our members, and in that ability that may be afforded us, to assist and advise such meetings and members as circumstances may require and way open for, under the direction of best Wisdom,’ having had our minds introduced into deep concern and exercise on account of the course pursued for some time past by John Wilbur, a member of South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, in the station of a Minister, believe that the time has now come for us to state some of the particulars wherein he has departed from the good order of our religious Society, in the disregard of our Christian Discipline.

“ He has circulated an anonymous pamphlet which impeached the character of our Society, and in which some of its important doctrines, as exemplified in the religious engagements of some of its faithful ministers, are reproachfully held up to view; and which purports to contain the proceedings of London Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, with the sentiments of divers friends therein named, when the subject of liberating a minister to visit this country was before that meeting; the object of which, together with sundry letters which he has circulated, appears to be, to induce the belief that the con-

cern did not receive the unity of the meeting, and that the clerk did not act in conformity with the true sense and judgment of the meeting, in signing the certificate; thus endeavoring to invalidate both the proceedings and conclusions of a meeting in unity with this Yearly Meeting, and whose certificate on behalf of the same friend was received and united with as entered on our records. And while the friend was in this country and engaged in the discharge of his apprehended religious duty, with full certificates of unity from the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings of which he is a member, and the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders of London, and which were duly presented, received and accredited in all the Yearly Meetings in this country, except one which he did not attend;—and thus was he at liberty for religious service within their limits, in the full and acknowledged character of an approved and authenticated minister of the Society of Friends,—John Wilbur, for want as we believe of an humble abiding in the Truth, has circulated divers letters, one or more of which appears to have been written in England, and others originating with himself, addressed to different friends in this country, which were intended to shew that the minister thus liberated for religious service, was not in unity with his friends at home, contrary to the long established order of our religious Society, and designed to close his way in the minds of Friends. And we also believe, for want of maintaining his integrity in that dependence upon the Holy Spirit, which would have preserved him in unity with Friends, he has indulged in a spirit of detraction, in speaking and writing, by which the religious character of divers friends in our own and other Yearly Meetings has been much misrepresented. Many friends were introduced into deep concern on his account, and several of them treated with him in tenderness and love in relation to it; but without producing any apparent change in his mind; and there having been a committee appointed by Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, in the 5th mo., 1840, of which body he was a member, on account of existing deficiencies, as manifested by the answers to the queries, and under a concern for the cause of Truth; and they having been made acquainted with John Wilbur's course as last above stated, and he having made di-

vers assertions tending to induce dissatisfaction among Friends, and with the proceedings of our Yearly Meeting in various particulars, and calculated to produce divisions therein ; and also to disturb the unity of different Yearly Meetings, and to alienate the feelings of their members from each other ; sought an opportunity with him, in which they endeavored to show him the effects of his proceedings, both upon himself and others ; but he, so far from receiving these labors of love in the spirit in which they were administered, soon after wrote a letter to one of the committee, in which he made unjust insinuations, and preferred charges against them which they deny in points of fact. They nevertheless continued their care and labor, but his mind appearing closed against their advice, in the 5th mo., 1841, we at their request believed it to be our duty to extend care in his case. And it is with deep regret and sorrow, we have observed the effect his course of conduct has produced in lessening that regard for the wholesome restraints of the Discipline, and for the labor of faithful friends for the preservation of that good order, love and unity which are essential to the peace and welfare of the body.

“ We have had repeated opportunities with him in which we have labored to convince him of his errors ; but this desirable object not having been accomplished, and after having waited several months to afford him opportunity to make satisfaction for his deviations, and two of the committee having unavailingly visited him at his own house, and there not appearing that change in his mind, which is necessary to his being restored to the unity of Friends, we now believe it incumbent upon us in discharge of the service confided to us by the Yearly Meeting, to recommend his case to the immediate notice and care of South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting.”*

* The Discipline of our Yearly Meeting provides no specific mode of bringing the case of offenders before our Monthly Meetings. The more general practice of Friends with us, is that complaints come to the Monthly Meetings from the overseers, either through the Preparative Meetings or otherwise. But the support of good order and discipline, from the existing state of things in different meetings, has rendered a departure from this course necessary in divers instances, both in early and later time, as fully appears from the Records of various meetings.

The Yearly Meeting's Committee having in full unity adopted the foregoing document, appointed several of their number to attend South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, to be held on the 25th of the 4th mo., and lay the same before that meeting ; to which service they attended and presented the communication to said meeting, which was read and directed to be recorded ; and a committee of four friends was appointed to visit John Wilbur on the occasion. When the above communication was read in the meeting, it appeared he did not expect it would be entered upon the records, and he manifested much objection to it, notwithstanding he remarked, "I am glad it has come here, it has long been a suffering case, and now I shall be tried by *my friends.*" The friend who was now clerk of the meeting, a worthy elder in Society, it was believed would act impartially in the case. At the next Monthly Meeting, it being their usual time for the appointment of clerk, and the usage of that meeting being, for the representatives from the Preparative Meetings to propose the name of a clerk to the meeting, they met, but could not agree upon a name ; a part of them being in favor of the re-appointment of the old Clerk, and the others for substituting a person in his place who, in divers respects, was considered unsuitable for the station. The meeting was informed that the representatives could not agree upon a clerk, and it was proposed by those in favor of sustaining the order of Society, that the subject should be deferred one month ; while on the other hand violent opposition was made to this course, and another person proposed as clerk, whose name had not been under consideration by the representatives, when together for that service. Much tumult and disorder ensued ; many taking an active part in producing it, who were not in the practise of regularly attending meetings for discipline, nor careful in the support of our Christian testimonies. After a scene of great disorder, which was continued for

a long time, the clerk, after bearing his testimony against their proceedings, withdrew from the table without making any minute in the case ; and the individual who had thus been proposed out of the established practice of that meeting, assumed the place, and made a minute appointing himself as clerk for the ensuing year. Thus was a person placed at the table in an irregular manner, and contrary to the judgment of many well concerned and consistent friends. The next irregular step was to make an addition to the committee appointed the previous month in the case of John Wilbur. Five persons were added to the committee ; four of whom were his family connexions, and all of them it was believed, very much under his influence. As an evidence of the arrangement made out of meeting, in relation to the appointment of this addition to the Committee, it may be mentioned, that when a friend was named, who it was believed would act with impartiality, a son-in-law of John Wilbur objected to his name, alleging as a reason, that he was requested by John Wilbur to do so, should he be nominated ; and the acting clerk accordingly refused to take his name.

In the 6th mo. 1842, the Yearly Meeting again appointed a Committee to act on its behalf, with the same concern in view as heretofore. At a meeting of this Committee at Newport the 17th of 6th mo. 1842, twenty-three members being present, they were united in advising Timothy C. Collins, the former Clerk, not to give up the books and papers of South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, but to keep them safely, as the proceedings of that meeting in the appointment of Clerk had not been regular.

On the 27th of 6th mo. a number of the Yearly Meeting's Committee again attended South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting. The following is an extract from the minutes made on the occasion :

“ Most of the proceedings of the Monthly Meeting were

conducted in a very exceptionable manner; and on the part of some of its members disorderly in no small degree, and the Committee became apprehensive that the members who constitute this meeting in their present disjointed and unsettled state, are not in a situation to hold a Monthly Meeting to the honor and reputation of society. And finding as we did that they had at their previous Monthly Meeting displaced the Clerk in an unusual and abrupt manner, and appointed another to that office as before stated, all of which was against the judgment and wishes of the solid portion of the members; we, therefore, with a view to the promotion of unity and harmony among them, believed it right to advise the meeting to reinstate the former Clerk, and the present one to withdraw from the table. This advice and proposal a considerable portion of the members objected to, and refused to comply with, and manifested great disrespect towards the Committee, by many unkind expressions and insinuations. We were likewise informed that at their last meeting they made an addition of five to the committee appointed in the 4th mo. last, in the case of John Wilbur; which addition or appointment, with its attendant unjustifiable circumstances, was cause of regret to the rightly exercised members of the meeting, and we think is evidently calculated to embarrass, if not entirely defeat any just decision in that case. In taking a view of the state and condition of that meeting, and the transactions here detailed, we are induced to believe that what has already transpired, is only the precursor of a still greater departure from good order and the truth, even to open revolt.

"It seems proper further to note that the becoming moderation and christian meekness evinced by the rightly exercised part of the meeting, afforded us the comfortable assurance that the true seed, although oppressed and borne down, is far from being extinct.

On the 11th of the 7th mo. following, six of the Yearly Meeting's Committee met those appointed by South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting in the case of John Wilbur and proceeded to lay before them full documentary evidence to establish each point contained in the communication addressed to the Monthly Meeting against him. After going through with which, he in his defence

brought before the committee what purported to be extracts from the writings of the friend from England, towards whom he had manifested his opposition. To this they objected as being wholly irrelevant to the case ; the complaint against him being for a violation of the order and discipline of the Society ; and upon its being finally decided by most of the Monthly Meeting's Committee, to allow him to take what course he chose in justification of himself, the Yearly Meeting's Committee presented them with the following written memorandum, and withdrew, viz.: "As you have decided not to confine the investigation to the charges submitted in the document presented to the Monthly Meeting ; but allow the subject of doctrines to be introduced in justification of the charges ; we must decline remaining any longer present with the Committee."

On the 25th of 7th mo., several of the Yearly Meeting's Committee attended South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting. It was very apparent that those who attempted to control the proceedings of the meeting, through the assistance of their clerk, who was irregularly and improperly appointed, were not qualified to conduct the affairs of the Church ; being apparently deficient in a religious sense of the weight and importance of the work.

After this meeting, the Yearly Meeting's Committee presented the following communication to Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, held the 4th of 8th month, 1842.

"To Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting :

"A number of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, having several times recently attended South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, have become satisfied, that from the want of love and unity, and from the spirit of insubordination manifest amongst them, in the management of the concerns of Society, they are not in a suitable state to conduct the affairs of the Church to the honour of

Truth : and we are united in judgment that the immediate care of the Quarterly Meeting needs to be extended in the case. 7th mo. 25th, 1842."

The subject being thus brought before the Quarterly Meeting, and the answers to the queries from South-Kingstown, and also from Swanzey Monthly Meeting, manifesting great deficiencies, a committee was appointed and the following minute made in the case, viz :

" At Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, held at Portsmouth, the 4th of 8th mo., 1842, the following communication from the Yearly Meeting's Committee was received at this time. And it appearing by the answers to the queries that there is a want of that love and unity which are essential to the best interests of the body, both in South-Kingstown and Swanzey Monthly Meetings ; the whole subject received our deliberate and solid consideration, and we appoint the following friends to visit those meetings and labor in conjunction with the Yearly Meeting's Committee, for the preservation of right order and the promotion of love and unity ; and they are requested to act in our behalf in rendering such advice and assistance to said meetings and individuals as best Wisdom may direct, and report to our next meeting."

On the 22d of the 8th mo., 1842, a number of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, in conjunction with the Committee of the Quarterly Meeting, again attended South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting. The following extract from the minutes of the first named committee, gives an account of their proceedings, viz :

" When the opening minute, and the minute of the Quarterly Meeting, making the appointment of a committee, were read, a report from the committee in John Wilbur's case was called for by a member ; which was immediately presented and read. It was signed by seven members, and stated in substance, that they had heard the Yearly Meeting's Committee and John Wilbur, and that they were of the judgment that the evidence adduced did not support the charges ; and it ended in recommending the dismissal of the complaint against him.

" A report was also presented signed by two of the

committee, stating, substantially, that they considered all the charges fully verified, and that they differed entirely in judgment from the other members of the committee, &c. This report they refused for a considerable time to read. In favor of the reading, it was stated, that they being a part of the committee, had a right to be heard as to their judgment in the case, as that would give the meeting an understanding of the whole matter as viewed by all the Committee. They at length yielded, and after it was read, they urged the reception of the report signed by the seven; and it appeared that those who were in favor of receiving it, were nearly all of them John Wilbur's near relatives:—among them were one son, four sons-in-law, and a number of his connexions more remote; there being only one or two who were unconnected either by consanguinity or affinity. It therefore appeared, as far as the preparing of the report and advocating its reception were concerned, to be almost entirely a family matter.

“The committee held up to their view the serious consequences of the course they were pursuing, in attempting thus to restore him, as it would be done without his making any concession, and he thereby would be left a member while he was out of unity with the great body of Friends. To obviate which, it was proposed that the case be deferred one month, to give the committee an opportunity of further labor with him to produce, if it might be, a reconciliation with friends, that his restoration might be in the harmony and unity of Society. This was also the united advice of the Quarterly Meeting’s Committee to the Monthly Meeting. This course was earnestly opposed; some saying they were aware of the authority of the Quarterly Meeting to give them advice, but as the Monthly Meeting had a right to act independently according to their own judgment, they might receive or reject it, as they thought proper: if they had no independence of action, it was not advice, but a mere mandate. Thus they continued to set at nought and entirely reject the counsel and advice administered to them, by both Committees then present; and finally a minute was made accepting the report of the Committee of seven, restoring John Wilbur to membership, contrary to

the expressed sense and judgment of divers well concerned and consistent members of that meeting."*

The Quarterly Meeting's Committee again attended South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, the 24th of 10th mo., 1842, and presented to it the following communication, viz :

" The Committee appointed by the Quarterly Meeting to visit South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, and for other services, now believe it right to state to South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, that having taken into our deliberate consideration the proceedings of that meeting in the eighth month last, and other proceedings connected with it, which have had the effect to produce the present unhappy differences existing in that meeting, and the state of insubordination in which it now is, have come to the conclusion, that the placing of Samuel Sheffield at the table, to act as Clerk, in the fifth month last, in the irregular and disorderly manner in which it was effected ; and by which procedure the feelings and views of many of the members were wholly disregarded ; and being satisfied that he took his seat at the table and made the minute appointing himself, out of the usual and long established order of South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting in appointing their Clerk : We do therefore unite with the advice previously given to Timothy C. Collins, by the Yearly Meeting's Committee, that he should continue for the present to retain the records of that meeting. And as this committee were also fully united in the advice given in the eighth month last to South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, not to accept the report in the case of John Wilbur, presented by that portion of the committee, five of whom were added contrary to the general usage of our Society, to the committee appointed in the fourth month to have charge of the case, after Samuel Sheffield took his seat at the table in the fifth month ; and as we have cause to apprehend, from the manner in which they

* Two of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, present at this time, have been charged with attempting to break up the meeting, while the report in the case of John Wilbur was under consideration in the Women's Meeting, which charge they utterly deny.

were selected, and from their relationship to the individual under care, it was with a view to prevent the impartial exercise of our Christian Discipline : We, therefore, now on behalf of the Quarterly Meeting, advise South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting at this time to remove Samuel Sheffield from acting as Clerk, and to re-appoint Timothy C. Collins to the service ;—to dismiss the case of Timothy C. Collins from their records, and discharge the Committee appointed last month to visit him as an offender for retaining the records of said meeting as advised to do by this Committee ;—and likewise that the decision in the eighth month last, as entered on their minutes in relation to John Wilbur, against the judgment of many concerned friends of that meeting, and regardless of the united advice of this Committee, be now set aside, and be made void and of no effect."

The meeting not being willing to receive this advice, as it was bound to do by the provisions of Discipline, and then, if not satisfied therewith to appeal therefrom ; and the advice being offered in the name and on behalf of the Quarterly Meeting, the Committee deemed it proper to make the following report of the case to the Quarterly Meeting in the 11th month, proposing that South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting should be dissolved, viz :

"To Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting to be held at Somerset :

The Committee appointed to visit Swanzey and South Kingstown Monthly Meetings, and for other services, report :—that several of their number attended two sittings of Swanzey Monthly Meeting, and communicated such advice as appeared to them suitable at the time and as way opened for : that they attended the Monthly Meeting of South-Kingstown in the eighth month, and in conjunction with a number of the Yearly Meeting's Committee then present, endeavored to labor, we trust in a spirit of love, for the preservation of right order in the exercise of the Discipline, and to encourage a proper submission to the advice of superior meetings, so essential to the best interests of our Society. We regret to inform that our counsel did not meet on the part of many with a kind re-

ception, and the disposition was manifest and prevailed, to act as an independent body.

The following communication was prepared and presented at their last meeting, viz.: [cited above.] This communication was read in the meeting and directed to be recorded, and its further consideration referred to their next meeting. Several friends expressed their desire that its recommendations should be conformed to by the meeting. From what has been witnessed by the Committee, and from authentic information derived from others, they have come to the conclusion after a careful consideration of the subject, that South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting is not in a suitable state to conduct the affairs of the church in accordance with our Christian Discipline, nor consistently with our religious profession. We therefore submit it to the Quarterly Meeting as our judgment, that South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting be dissolved, and that the members constituting it be joined to those constituting Greenwich Monthly Meeting."

This report was weightily considered and fully united with, and the meeting accordingly dissolved; and the following minute made in the case, viz.:

"The Committee appointed at our last meeting to visit Swanzey and South Kingstown Monthly Meetings, and for other services, made the following report, viz: [see said report above] which is accepted; and after a solid consideration of the subject, this meeting concluded, with the unity of the Women's Meeting, to discontinue and dissolve South Kingstown Monthly Meeting, and to join its members to those composing Greenwich Monthly Meeting, and to join the Select Preparative Meeting to those of Greenwich Monthly Meeting: the books of record and papers of the former are to be delivered to such person as the latter may appoint to receive them. The proceedings of South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting against Timothy C. Collins, after being informed by the Committee acting on our behalf of the advice given to him, are hereby annulled and declared to have no effect whatever. And the minute made in the 5th month, adding to the Committee appointed in the 4th month, upon the complaint made against John Wilbur, of five members, and the minute made in the 8th month, accept-

ing the report of a part of the Committee in his case, being at the time made against the direct advice of the Quarterly Meeting's Committee, are also hereby annulled and declared void. All other unfinished business now before that meeting, is directed to be transferred to Greenwich Monthly Meeting, and Committees and others under appointment by South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, are requested to report to Greenwich Monthly Meeting. The Committee now under appointment are requested to have a copy of this minute, signed by the Clerk, read at the opening of their next Monthly Meeting at Hopkinton, and to request those assembled quietly to separate and consider themselves of Greenwich Monthly Meeting, and under its care. At Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting held at Somerset 11th mo. 3d, 1842."

The Committee of the Quarterly Meeting attended the next Monthly Meeting of South-Kingstown held at Hopkinton, the 21st of the 11th month, and read the minute of the Quarterly Meeting ; when all those who were in unity with said meeting quietly withdrew from the house; while the others remained together and came to the conclusion to appeal to our next Yearly Meeting from the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting.

At Greenwich Monthly Meeting of Friends held at Cranston 11th mo. 28th, 1842, the foregoing communication from the Quarterly Meeting was read, and the following minute made in relation thereto, viz :

" After deliberate consideration on the contents of said extracts from the minutes of the Quarterly Meeting, and in due submission as a subordinate branch of said meeting, we acquiesce therein, and acknowledge and receive the members heretofore constituting South Kingstown Monthly Meeting, as members of this meeting, subject alike with our other members to its future disciplinary action and decision ; and in this we have the concurrence of our Women's Meeting : and the members heretofore constituting South Kingstown Select Meeting are in like manner joined to Greenwich Select meeting. And it is the conclusion of this meeting, that Preparative meetings be held as heretofore until otherwise directed, viz : at

South Kingstown, Western, and Hopkinton ; and the said meetings are requested to report to this meeting, and the Clerk is requested to furnish each of the said Preparative meetings with a copy of this minute.

The Clerk of this meeting is appointed to call for and receive the books of record and papers of the late Monthly Meeting of South-Kingstown."

At Greenwich Monthly Meeting of Friends, held at East Greenwich 1st mo. 2d, 1843, the following minute was made, viz :

"It appearing by the records of the late Monthly Meeting of South Kingstown, that a Committee was appointed in the 4th month last, in the case of John Wilbur, to labor with him, and report their sense to a future meeting : agreeably to the directions of the Quarterly Meeting, as by minute of said meeting sent down and received by us at our last Monthly Meeting will appear—said Committee are now requested to report to this meeting."

The following action was taken in the case at the next Monthly Meeting, viz :

"At Greenwich Monthly Meeting of Friends held at Coventry 1st mo. 30th, 1843. The Committee in the case of John Wilbur as referred to by minute of our last Monthly Meeting, and who were thereby requested to report to this meeting, made the following, viz :

We of the Committee appointed by South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting in the 4th mo. last, in the case of John Wilbur, report : that we have attended to the duties assigned us by meeting John Wilbur and the Yearly Meeting's Committee, and hearing the evidence in the case ; and which was in our judgment sufficient to substantiate the charges preferred against him ; which charges having relation altogether to his departure from Discipline and good order, it was evident to us that his defence ought to be predicated on that ground alone ; and whereas the other part of the Committee were willing to allow him to make his defence, by leaving this, the only legitimate ground, and go into a justification of his conduct by allusions to doctrines, which in our view was entirely foreign to the subject matter under consideration : we therefore felt ourselves bound to dissent from such a course al-

together ; and it is our united sense and judgment that he is not in a situation and state of mind to be continued a member of our religious society ; which we submit to Greenwich Monthly Meeting of Friends next to be held at Coventry.

HEZEKIAH BABCOCK,
WILLIAM S. PERRY.

South-Kingstown, 1st mo. 21, 1843.

Which report, after a time of solid and deliberate consideration of the subject was united with : and he, the said John Wilbur, is accordingly disowned the right of inmembership in our religious Society ; having the unity of the Women's Meeting herein."

At Greenwich Monthly Meeting of Friends, held at Cranston, 2d mo. 27th, 1843, the following minute was made :

" The Committee to prepare an essay of a minute to be placed on our records in relation to the disownment of John Wilbur as a member of our religious Society, propose the following,—to be preceded by the communication made to South-Kingstown, viz : The Committee appointed by South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, in the 4th mo. last, in the case of John Wilbur, on account of the preceding communication, and in accordance with the decision of the Quarterly Meeting, requested to report to this meeting ; having at our last meeting, besides their written report, verbally reported that two of their number sought an interview with him on the subject of their appointment, which he declined ; and that the other two members of the Committee, declining to act in the case, we were induced to unite with them in the conclusion that further attempts to labor with him would not be productive of benefit, and that it was incumbent on us for the clearing of Truth, to disown him as a member of our religious Society.

" In coming to this painful conclusion, the meeting has been deeply and solemnly impressed with the conviction, that his departures from our Christian order have been the result of a want of a humble dependence on the teachings of the Holy Spirit, which would have preserved him in the path of propriety and safety. We feel an earnest desire that through mercy, he may yet be brought to a living sense of his situation, and be favored to at-

tain that place of true humility, in which he will be concerned to seek reconciliation with Friends."

From the decision of Greenwich Monthly Meeting, John Wilbur appealed to Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, which confirmed the judgment of the Monthly Meeting, in disowning him from our religious Society. From this decision of the Quarterly Meeting, he appealed to the Yearly Meeting, in the 6th month, 1844, and that meeting, by a very united voice, confirmed the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting. The following is the minute of the Yearly Meeting made in his case, viz :

" The Committee appointed on third day forenoon, the 18th, to take into consideration the case of John Wilbur's appeal from the judgment of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, in confirming the judgment of Greenwich Monthly Meeting, in disowning him, made a report signed by all the Committee, [twenty-one in number,] except one : that having all attended to their appointment, they had heard the appellant and the Committee of the said Quarterly Meeting, fully in the case, as acknowledged by the parties, and that after a time of solemn deliberation, they had come to the conclusion that the judgment of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting ought to be confirmed ; which, after a time of deliberate consideration thereon, was united with and accepted by this meeting ; and the judgment of said meeting confirmed accordingly.

" And John Wilbur being called in, agreeably to his request, the conclusion of the meeting in his case, as embraced in the above minute, was read in his presence."

While present in the Meeting, he acknowledged that he had been kindly and fully heard by the Committee.

Agreeably to notice given, a portion of the members of the late South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, appealed to the Yearly Meeting in 1843, from the decision of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting in dissolving said Monthly Meeting, and attaching its members to Greenwich Monthly Meeting, and the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting was confirmed by the Yearly Meeting. The following is the minute in the case :

"The Committee appointed on third day morning last to take into consideration the case of appeal from the judgment of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, in dissolving South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, and annexing the members constituting it to Greenwich Monthly Meeting, now produced a report signed by thirteen of their number, informing the meeting, that having given a full hearing to the parties respectively, they had, upon deliberation, come to the conclusion that the judgment of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting ought to be confirmed; which after a time of deliberate consideration thereon, was united with and accepted by this meeting, and the judgment of said meeting confirmed accordingly."*

As further evidence of the insubordination existing in this Yearly Meeting we proceed to state, that in Swanzey Monthly Meeting, for a long time past, there has been a want of that love and unity which are essential to the right conducting of the affairs of Truth. More than two years since, Committees were appointed in that meeting to propose the names of Clerk and Overseers of Society, but they were unable to agree upon friends for those stations. The state of this meeting had claimed the attention of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, and also of a Committee of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting previous to our last Yearly Meeting; and much labor had been bestowed by them to remedy the existing difficulties, and to produce that organization of the meeting that would enable it to carry into effect the Discipline, the administration of which had been seriously interrupted.

At our Yearly Meeting in 1844, the Committee to visit subordinate meetings reported, that in one or more of our Monthly Meetings, our Christian Discipline was not main-

* This committee consisted of twenty-one Friends—six of whom presented a counter report, in which they dissented from the above report, on account of what they apprehended irregularity in some of the proceedings: and two declined to sign either report; but when the case was under consideration in the meeting, one expressed his unity with the report of the majority.

tained to the honor of Truth, and a Committee was again appointed to extend a general care on our behalf for the preservation of love and unity among our members; the maintenance of our Christian principles and testimonies, and in the support of the Discipline of the Church, and in the ability that may be afforded them, to assist and advise such meetings and members as circumstances may require and way open for under the direction of best Wisdom."

The Yearly Meeting's Committee with a number of the Quarterly Meeting's Committee then under appointment, met with those two committees in the 7th month, and united with a part of them in their proposing to the meeting the names of certain persons for Clerks and Overseers.

With the exception of two or three individuals, all the members of those committees of the Monthly Meeting, either united with the names proposed or expressed their acquiescence therein, when in the presence of the committee; but those who had thus acquiesced, subsequently did not sign the reports to the Monthly Meeting. The names of the individuals thus agreed upon, were accordingly reported to the Monthly Meeting, and the reports were fully united with by the large body of the members of that meeting, although a few individuals opposed it.

The Yearly Meeting's Committee then presented to the meeting the following written advice, viz :

"To Swanzey Monthly Meeting :

" Dear Friends,—The Committee appointed by the Yearly Meeting to extend a general care on its behalf for the preservation of love and unity among our members, the maintenance of our Christian principles and testimonies, and the support of the Discipline of the Church, and in the ability that may be afforded them, to assist and advise such meetings and members as circumstances may require and way open for, under the direction of best Wisdom; having, from a belief that our duty under

our appointment required it, met with the committees of your meeting, appointed about two years since, to propose the names of Overseers and Clerks ; and apprehending that the cause of Truth and the right exercise of our Christian Discipline, urgently demand that there should be no further delay in the cases, were united in giving the following advice :—It appearing by the voluntary declaration of those members of a committee, who were present, appointed as we apprehend without the authority of discipline, and out of the usual order of Society, to assist the overseers when they presented a complaint against an individual, that they believed Edmund Chase to be innocent of the charges preferred against him by said individual ; and that they did not intend in their report to the Monthly Meeting, to implicate him ; we were united in judgment that this document ought not to be retained by the Monthly Meeting among its papers, but destroyed.

“ The Committee on Overseers informed us that they had agreed upon five friends for this station, and there being but one of them from within the limits of Fall River Preparative Meeting, (it being usual to appoint two from that meeting,) in view of the circumstances, we were united in advising the committee to propose to the meeting to appoint Edmund Chase, in addition to those named, there not appearing any ground for the objection originally urged against his appointment. The Committee in relation to Clerks, informed us that they could not agree upon names, and after a full consideration of the case, we thought it right to advise the committee to propose to the Monthly Meeting to appoint David Shove for Clerk, and Jonathan Freeborn for Assistant Clerk ; and we are now united in advising the Monthly Meeting to make these appointments, and carry into effect these recommendations, believing that thereby the best interests of the Monthly Meeting and its preservation in unity with the Quarterly and Yearly Meetings will be promoted.

On behalf of the Committee,
ROWLAND GREENE.”

Swanzey, 7th mo. 29, 1844.

The same individuals who opposed making the appointments, now opposed the acceptance of this advice,

and Thomas Wilbur, the Clerk, who was one of the number, and who is a son of John Wilbur, refused to record the clearly expressed sense of the meeting, although earnestly advised to do so; by the Yearly Meeting's Committee in attendance.

The condition of this meeting as it then stood was presented to the Quarterly Meeting in the 8th month, which released its committee previously under appointment, and appointed another to visit Swanzey Monthly Meeting and assist in its due organization, that our Christian Discipline might be supported as in former days to the honor of Truth.

At the following Monthly Meeting the individual who had previously acted as Clerk, still persisting to hold that station, contrary to the fully expressed sense of the meeting, and to the earnest entreaty and advice of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, and the Monthly Meeting having again at this time, (with the exception of those persons who had manifested their opposition at the last meeting,) united in the appointment as Clerk, of the friend who had been selected at the previous meeting, the individual thus selected proceeded to open the meeting, and the representatives from all the Preparative Meetings presented to him the reports from those meetings, and all answered to the calling of their names. During the time that he was preparing his opening minute, one of those who had opposed his appointment, walked to the Clerk's table, which Thomas Wilbur continued to occupy and refused to leave, and placed upon it a paper, which he immediately arose and read, without the liberty of the meeting, which was believed to be an extract from the revised statutes of Massachusetts, showing what was the penalty for disturbing meetings for Divine Worship, and other religious assemblies.

Notwithstanding the meeting had thus appointed David Shove as Clerk, and he was acting in that capacity,

Thomas Wilbur continued to sit at the table, and to form and read minutes ; and to prevent confusion, Friends, after having read the minute of the Quarterly Meeting appointing its Committee, adjourned to a later hour in the afternoon ; by far the larger part of the Men's Meeting and all the Women, withdrawing from the house, and mostly assembling again at the hour of adjournment, to transact the business of the meeting. The persons who sustained the former Clerk in his decision against the judgment of the meeting, with several women who were also disaffected towards Society, continued to hold what they call Monthly Meetings ; and at Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, in the eleventh month, they presented an account purporting to come from Swanzey Monthly Meeting, which was not received or in any way acknowledged. After the business of the Quarterly Meeting was concluded, these individuals, with a few from the other Monthly Meetings, both men and women, most of whom had for a length of time openly manifested a want of unity with Friends, remained in the house, and called themselves Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, appointing Clerks, and a committee to visit subordinate meetings. This Committee, thus appointed, has since visited the Monthly Meetings, and attempted to sit in them, and to be recognized as a Committee from the Quarterly Meeting, organized as we have described, in a wholly unprecedented and irregular manner. Most of them being already under dealing as offenders in their respective Monthly Meetings, and refusing to leave Friends select—for the support of our Discipline, adjournment has been resorted to, in order to be freed from this intrusion. A few individuals have been found in each of the Monthly Meetings in Rhode-Island Quarter, who being disaffected towards the body of Friends, have, under the advisement of this committee, united in forming what they denom-.

nate Monthly Meetings, assuming to themselves the names of those meetings respectively.

At the opening of the Yearly Meeting, on second day morning, the 16th of 6th mo., the Clerk proceeded to call over the names of the Representatives from the several Quarterly Meetings, [eight in number,] which had been previously entered, as customary, from the accounts that had been handed him from those meetings ; when it appeared that all the Friends named in those accounts were present, except three, for whose absence satisfactory reasons were given.

After commencing to read the minute in which the names of the Representatives had been thus entered, another paper addressed to " New-England Yearly Meeting of Friends," was laid upon the table, also purporting to be an account from Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting ; and by direction of the Yearly Meeting, the names of the persons therein given as Representatives to this meeting were also entered upon the minutes and called, when it appeared that they were all present. The last named account was signed by Charles Perry, Assistant Clerk, it being stated that the Clerk was prevented from acting by sickness.

A proposition was then made, and united with by the meeting, that the Representatives from the other seven Quarterly Meetings, those named in the two accounts from Rhode-Island being excluded, should constitute a Committee, before whom the persons claiming to be Representatives from that Quarterly Meeting should be fully heard on the subject of their claims respectively ; and that the Committee, after deliberating thereon, should report to the Yearly Meeting which of the two bodies thus claiming, was, in their judgment, the true Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, in unity with and subordinate to this meeting, and entitled to send Representatives thereto—

no objection being made to the case being opened in the meeting in its collective capacity, should this be subsequently judged best. The persons who claimed to be aggrieved, denied the jurisdiction of this committee, and declined entering into any investigation of their case before them, notwithstanding they had previously submitted it to the meeting, preferring charges of unfairness in the appointment of the Representatives in the Quarterly Meetings. They stated that the Representatives were appointed with reference to this business, and that prescriptive measures were employed in one Quarterly Meeting at least, to obtain such as were desired. It was distinctly denied by Friends that any such intention existed—that no friend from any part of the Yearly Meeting could have had any expectation of such a reference when the Representatives were appointed; and in a subsequent sitting, this denial was confirmed by the statements of Friends from each of the Quarterly Meetings so accused.

It may be proper here to remark, that as the meeting had previously expressed its sense, that all those claiming to be members of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting ought to leave the discussion and decision of the question to members from the other Quarters; and as the Representatives from the other Quarters would, under the proposed reference, be judges in the case, these two classes being excluded, the number of those who opposed the reference of the subject to the Representatives, was very small.

This subject having been thus far disposed of, the Meeting came to the conclusion that no other business could with propriety be entered upon by the Yearly Meeting till it was fully determined. And instead of proceeding to the appointment of Clerks on 2d day afternoon, as usual, decided that the Clerks then under appointment should continue to serve the Meeting until the question was settled.

Two accounts purporting to be from Rhode-Island Quarter, were also presented to the Women's Yearly Meeting, and the whole subject was similarly disposed of by that meeting, by referring it to all the representatives, except those from Rhode-Island, to report thereon.

Soon after the opening of the afternoon sitting, a person under appointment as one of the Representatives from Sandwich Quarter, rose and said, that a portion of the Representatives had been together, and concluded to propose the name of Thomas B. Gould for Clerk, and Charles Perry for Assistant Clerk. Upon this, several individuals rose in quick succession, and expressed unity with the nomination. The large body of the Representatives informed the meeting, that they had no knowledge that any such proposition was about to be made, and by a very general expression of the members of the Meeting, as well as of the Representatives, the course proposed was wholly disapproved. On calling the names of *all* the Representatives in attendance from the several Quarterly Meetings, except Rhode-Island, it appeared by their express declaration, that *forty-one* of their number were not consulted in relation to the appointment of Clerks, and that they now entirely dissent from the appointment of Thomas B. Gould and Charles Perry, while *four* made no response when their names were called, *forty-five* being the whole number in attendance, with the exception of those named in the accounts from Rhode-Island. But the persons thus nominated to act as Clerks, with others, their adherents, proceeded in reading and speaking, to the disturbance of the meeting. The Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, by its fully expressed direction, solemnly protested against their proceedings, and desired them to desist. To this, however, they paid but little attention, and continued to carry on their own business till the adjournment of the meeting. Similar disorderly proceedings took place in

the Women's Meeting, with the exception that the Seceders left the house before the meeting adjourned.

During these disorders, Friends were preserved in much quietness, patiently waiting for an opportunity to commence the business of the Yearly Meeting.

On third day morning, the 17th, the committee in the case of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, made a report, in which, after giving a statement of the various circumstances connected with the subject referred to their consideration, they express their "united sense and judgment, that the accounts from Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, signed by David Buffum and Sarah F. Tobey, as Clerks, should be received as the true accounts from said Quarterly Meeting, and that the representatives" therein named "should be considered and acknowledged as the representatives from that Quarterly Meeting to this Yearly Meeting." This report was signed by forty-one men, and thirty-eight women, being all the representatives in attendance in the Men's Meeting, except four, and all in the Women's Meeting, except two, apart from the representatives named in the two accounts from Rhode-Island. After the Report was read, two friends were appointed to inform the representatives named in the account signed by Charles Perry, Assistant Clerk, that the Committee to whom their claims were referred, had made a report, which was about to be considered, and that they might be heard thereon. After a short absence, one of the friends reported that he had delivered the message intrusted to them, to a number of those persons named in the report, whom they found assembled in the yard, in company with others. Having waited a sufficient time, the meeting, after hearing the report a second time, by a very general expression confirmed its conclusions, and thus acknowledged the meeting, of which the accounts were signed by David Buffum and Sarah F. Tobey, as Clerks, to be the true Quarterly Meeting of Rhode-Island,

and the Representatives named therein, to be the Representatives from Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting to this Yearly Meeting.

While this subject was under consideration, three persons came into the meeting and demanded the use of the Clerk's table, and the transfer to them of the books and papers belonging to the Yearly Meeting, stating that they were deputed by what they called "New-England Yearly Meeting," to make this demand. The Clerk, in reply, stated that New-England Yearly Meeting was then sitting in this house, and could not deliver the books and papers, nor the occupancy of the Clerk's table or of the house to any other persons.

Since this time, the persons who disturbed us have not attended with us, and we have been favored to transact the various concerns of society claiming our attention, with great harmony and brotherly love.

We believe the number of those disaffected towards Friends, within our limits, to be comparatively small, and are comforted in the view, that the body of Friends among us are united in harmonious labor for the promotion of the cause of Truth.

At New-England Yearly Meeting, 6th mo. 1845.

"The Committee appointed to consider various subjects connected with the welfare of Society, laid before this meeting the foregoing Document, being a Narrative of facts and circumstances that have tended to produce a secession from Friends in this Yearly Meeting, which was read, and being considered, it was united with by a full expression of this Meeting, as being proper information for our own members, and those of otherly Yearly Meetings, and the Clerk was directed to sign it on our behalf."

From the Minutes of said Meeting,

ABRAHAM SHEARMAN, Jun., Clerk.

HANNAH GOULD, Jun., Clerk.

A

DECLARATION

OF

NEW-ENGLAND

YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,

UPON VARIOUS

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES:

COMPOSED MOSTLY OF EXTRACTS FROM THE APPROVED
WRITINGS OF THE SOCIETY.

PROVIDENCE:
PRINTED BY KNOWLES AND VOSE.

1845.

KC

**To our Quarterly and Monthly Meetings,
and Friends of the several Yearly Meet-
ings on the American continent.**

DEAR FRIENDS :

We have come up to this, our annual assembly, with feelings humbled under a sense of varied trials that surround us ; and, we trust, with hearts turned unto the source and fountain of all good that we might witness preservation, and that the Lord might graciously make a way for us that his Truth might be sustained. And, unworthy as we are in His sight, we feel bound thankfully to acknowledge that we have had good evidence, mercifully granted, that our Heavenly Father has been pleased to remember us—to extend his wing of preservation in good measure over us, and at times has permitted us, not only to take sweet counsel together, but to be refreshed a little with that sustenance which cometh alone from Him —to His great name be the praise.

And while this has been our experience, our dear absent brethren have been feelingly remembered, with desires for their preservation in the truth as it is in Jesus ; and, dear friends, may none of us be moved away from the hope of the Gospel, or from that sure mark and badge of the true disciple, the love of the brethren, “for by this,” saith Christ, “shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one unto another.”

The painful occurrence of a secession from our religious society having at this time taken place, accompanied by circumstances which have covered our spirits with mourning, we believe ourselves solemnly called upon in this address, to declare that some who have heretofore been under our name, and of whom we had hoped other and better things, influenced as we fear by a dividing spirit, have not only withdrawn themselves from our meeting at this time, but have heretofore, as well as now, uncharitably accused us of departing from the ancient doctrines and testimonies borne by our early predecessors in the truth, and openly declared, that we are unsound in the faith of the Gospel of Christ, as held and promulgated by them.

These accusations, while they have filled our minds with astonishment and sorrow, we feel bound fully and explicitly to deny. Friends of this Yearly Meeting have not so departed. On the contrary, the ancient doctrines held by our Society, in all their fullness and in all their excellence, are unabatedly dear to us.

Friends, we are sensible that we are encompassed with weakness, that many of us fall short of fully shewing out in life and conversation, the fruits of these blessed doctrines; nevertheless, they are still precious to us, and our desire is that we may all, through obedience and submission to the sanctifying operation of the spirit of truth, come more and more consistently to bear our testimonies to them before the world.

The all-wise disposer of events, at various times in the history of our religious society, has permitted that trials of the kind with which we are now exercised should befall it.

In very early days, on the first gathering and settlement of Meetings in the Society, there were gainsayers and accusers, and at various times since have there arisen among us those who have caused divisions and brought

grievous accusations against their brethren. Be not dismayed, then, dear friends, as if some new thing had happened unto us, but remember that he who hath been with his people in all their trials, hath graciously promised that he will never leave nor forsake those who put their trust in him ; and even though it should be given us to bear perils among false brethren, yet let none of these things move us away from the hope of the gospel, or from that fervent charity which, according to apostolic testimony, suffereth long and is kind, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, beareth all things, hopeth all things.

The zeal and fidelity of Friends at different periods of our history, both in very early and more recent times, when the cause of truth which was dear to their hearts required it, have been evinced in their solemn declarations of their faith, issued not only to their own members, but in the face of the world. We believe in the ordering of Divine Providence, under our present circumstances, we are called upon again to set forth our faith ; and we do therefore unequivocally declare, that the following testimonies, composed mostly of extracts from early writers in the Society, whose writings have ever been approved and sanctioned, are and ever have been our faith and belief upon the subjects referred to therein ; and we do earnestly and affectionately entreat all our members to hold fast the profession thereof, without wavering.

*Of the One True God and the Three that bear record
in Heaven :*

“ The Society of Friends have uniformly declared their belief in One Only Wise, Omnipotent and Eternal Being, the Creator and Preserver of all things ; infinite in all glorious attributes and perfections ; the inexhaustible source of all good as well as of all happiness, and the holy object of adoration, worship and praise, from angels and from men.”—[*Evans' Exposition.*]

In speaking of the Three that bear record in heaven, they have always considered it safest—finite and limited beings as we are—to confine themselves to the language of Holy Scripture, and hence have ever been scrupulous of using the word *person*, or any term of human invention, as applied to the Father, Son or Holy Spirit; but as Barclay declares, so we believe :

“ There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are one. The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now the saints have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that they might know the things which are freely given them of God. For the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father sends, in Christ’s name, he teacheth them all things, and bringeth all things to their remembrance.”—[*Barclay’s Confession of Faith*, p. 104, 1673.]

“ Though we have rejected the terms of *separate and distinct persons*, in the Godhead, as conveying ideas too gross to be admitted in relation to that awful and mysterious subject, we have ever believed, and as constantly maintained, the truth of that great and mysterious doctrine of ‘ the three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and (that) these three are one’—one God, infinite, eternal, and incomprehensible, and blessed for ever more.”—[*Testimony of Friends*]

George Fox in a work entitled “ An answer to all such as falsely say that Quakers are no Christians,” declares—

“ We own the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as the Apostles have declared. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth ; for there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one ; and there are three which bear record in earth, which we own. And now let none be offended, because we do not call

them by those unscriptural names of Trinity and Three persons, which are not Scripture words ; and so do falsely say that we deny the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, which three are one, that bear record in Heaven, &c. ; which three we own with all our hearts, as the Apostle John did, and as all true Christians ever did, and now do. And if you say we are not Christians, because we do not call the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Trinity, distinct and separate persons, then you may as well conclude that John was no Christian, who did not give the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, those names.

“ We believe, concerning God the Father, Son and Spirit, according to the testimony of the Holy Scripture, which we receive and embrace as the most authentic and perfect declaration of Christian faith, being indited by the Holy Spirit of God, that never errs : 1st. That there is one God and Father, of whom are all things. 2ndly. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom all things were made, who was glorified with the Father before the world began, who is God over all, blessed forever ; that there is one Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father and the Son, and leader and sanctifier, and comforter of his people. And we further believe, as the Holy Scriptures soundly and sufficiently express, that these three are one, even the Father, the Word, and the Spirit.”

“ The Society of Friends have declared, both by the concurrent testimony of many of its most eminent members, and in a collective capacity, their firm belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the *Saviour* of men : that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary—that he wrought miracles in the land of Judea, was hated and rejected by the chief priests and people of the Jews, betrayed by Judas, and crucified under Pontius Pilate : that he rose from the dead the third day, appeared to his disciples, and ascended to heaven, and ever liveth to make intercession for us ; that he is now come in Spirit, and hath given us an understanding, being our Prophet and High Priest, and head over all things to his church—by whom also God will judge the world in righteousness, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. This we say is that Lord Jesus Christ whom we own to be our life and salvation.”

The Society of Friends hold the precious fundamental doctrine of *Immediate Divine Revelation*, as expressed by Robert Barclay :

“ For Jesus Christ, in and by whom the Father is revealed, doth also reveal himself to his disciples and friends in and by his Spirit. As his manifestation was outward, when he testified and witnessed for the truth in this world, and approved himself faithful throughout, so being now withdrawn, as to the outward man, he doth teach and instruct mankind inwardly by his own Spirit. He standeth at the door and knocketh, and whoso heareth his voice and openeth, he comes in to these.”

“ He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself : ” this witness is the Holy Spirit, by which the Son of God reveals himself to the soul, gives it faith to believe in his all-powerful name, and as he is obeyed and followed, he displays his almighty power and goodness, in pardoning his past sins—delivering it out of the bondage of corruption, and translating it into the liberty of the sons of God. Thus Christ is experimentally known as the Redeemer, Saviour and Sanctifier of his people ; and those only have a right to call him so, whom he thus saves from their sins by his own blessed Spirit. “ Wherefore I give you to understand,” saith the apostle, “ that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed ; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

“ The nature of the New Covenant is expressed in Jeremiah, and repeated by the apostle, in these words : ‘ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days saith the Lord ; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord ; for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest.’ The object here is God’s law placed in the heart and written in the mind ; from whence they become God’s people, and are brought truly to know him. In this then the law is distinguished from the gospel : the law before was outward, written in tables of stone ; but it is now inward, written in the heart. Of old the people depended upon their priests for the knowledge of God, but now they all have

a certain and sensible knowledge of him. How much then are they deceived, who instead of making the gospel preferable to the law, have made the condition of such as are under the gospel far worse. For no doubt it is a far better and more desirable thing to converse with God immediately, than only mediately, as being a higher and more glorious dispensation."

From the Testimony of Friends in America, we extract the following :

"We therefore profess and firmly believe, that the *light of Christ*, in the heart, is an unerring guide, and the *primary rule of faith and practice*—that it is the only medium through which we can truly and livingly attain to the knowledge of God, and the mysteries of his heavenly kingdom.

"That the influences of the Holy Spirit must be *sensibly* experienced, in order to be availing to us, is evident in the very nature of divine things. It is this which produces all heavenly affections and feelings on the obedient mind—which opens the understanding, and gives it a right perception, and is in us an operative power, by which we are enabled to resist temptation, and walk in obedience to the law of God. By its powerful operations, we are washed and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, for it is 'by the Spirit of our God.' 1 Cor. 6-11. We desire to press the importance of this doctrine, and to guard it against innovations."

As regards *the Fall of Man, and the Means of Redemption*, the Society of Friends hold, that

"Man was originally created in the Divine image. 'In the image of God created he him,' 'crowned him with glory and honor,' and set him over the works of his hands. But by transgression he fell from this exalted condition ; incurred the penalty of *death* ; and so lost the divine image—the wisdom, purity, and power in which he was made. This lapse of our prime ancestors not only immediately affected the actual transgressors, but remotely all their posterity. The society of Friends, in declaring their belief of the extension of the effects of Adam's fall, to all his posterity, have been careful to distinguish be-

tween those effects, as they apply to us, simply in a state of nature, or as the posterity of Adam in his fallen state ; and the *guilt* or *sin* which attaches to us in consequence of our own actual transgressions.

“ Though we do not ascribe any whit of Adam’s guilt to men, until they make it their’s by the like acts of disobedience ; yet we cannot suppose that men, who are come of Adam naturally, can have any good thing in their nature, as belonging to it ; which he, from whom they derive their nature, had not himself to communicate unto them. If then we may affirm that Adam did not retain in his nature, (as belonging thereunto,) any will or light, capable to give him knowledge in spiritual things, then neither can his posterity. For whatsoever real good any man doeth, it proceedeth not from his *nature*, as he is *man*, or the son of Adam ; but from the *seed of God in him*, as a new visitation of life, in order to bring him out of his natural condition.—[*Barclay’s Apology.*]

“ For we affirm, that as all men partake of the fruit of *Adam’s* fall, in that by reason of that evil seed, which through him is communicated unto them, they are prone and inclined unto evil, though thousands of thousands be ignorant of *Adam’s* fall, neither ever knew of the eating of the forbidden fruit ; so also many may come to feel the influence of this holy and divine seed and light, and be turned from evil to good by it, though they knew nothing of Christ’s coming in the flesh, through whose obedience and sufferings it is purchased unto them.” *Ibid. Prop. V. & VI. § XV.* Thus “ by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned : (For until the law, sin was in the world : but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.” *Rom. 5 : 12, 13, 14.*

“ We consider then our redemption in a two fold respect or state, both which in their own nature are perfect, though in their application to us, the one is not, nor can be, without respect to the other. The first is the redemption performed and accomplished by Christ for us, in his crucified body without us ; the other is the redemption wrought by Christ in us, which no less properly is called

and accounted a redemption, than the former. The first, then, is that whereby man, as he stands in the fall, is put into a capacity of salvation, and hath conveyed unto him a measure of that power, virtue, spirit, life and grace, that was in Christ Jesus ; which as the free gift of God, is able to counterbalance, overcome and root out the evil seed, wherewith we are naturally as in the fall leavened. The second is that, whereby we witness and know this pure and perfect redemption *in ourselves*, purifying, cleansing and redeeming us from the power of corruption, and bringing us into unity, favor and friendship with God. By the first of these two, we that were lost in *Adam*, plunged in the bitter and corrupt seed, unable of ourselves to do any good thing, but naturally joined and united to evil, forward and propense to all iniquity ; servants and slaves to the power and spirit of darkness, are notwithstanding all this so far reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, while enemies, that we are put into a capacity of salvation ; having the glad tidings of the gospel of peace offered unto us, and God is reconciled unto us in Christ, calls and invites us to himself.

“ By the second, we witness this capacity brought into act, whereby receiving, and not resisting the purchase of his death, to wit : the light, spirit and grace of Christ, revealed in us, we witness and possess a real, true and inward redemption from the power and prevalency of sin, and so come to be truly and really redeemed, justified and made righteous, and to a sensible union and friendship with God. Thus *he died for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, and thus *we know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death*. This last follows the first in order, and is a consequence of it, proceeding from it, as an *effect* from its *cause*. So as none could have enjoyed the last, without the first had been, such being the will of God ; so also can none now partake of the first, but as he witnesseth the last.”

“ And not only does the propitiation of our Lord Jesus Christ apply to the effects of the *fall*, and places us in a capacity of obtaining salvation, but also to the actual transgressions of men. For as all men who have come to man’s estate (the man Jesus only excepted) have sinned, therefore all have need of this Saviour, to remove the wrath of God from them due to their offences ; in this

respect he is truly said to have borne the iniquities of us all in his body on the tree, and therefore is the only Mediator, having qualified the wrath of God towards us, so that our former sins stand not in our way, being, by virtue of his most satisfactory sacrifice, removed and pardoned. Neither do we think that remission of sins is to be expected, sought, or obtained, any other way, or by any works or sacrifice whatsoever.”—[*Barclay.*]

“ For sin once committed cannot be undone ; present and future obedience is no more than duty ; and past offences must still remain against us without forgiveness.”—[*Original and Present State of Man.*]

“ But in respect to us as moral agents, we believe that though Christ died for us, that we might be brought unto glory, yet we are not actually purified, fitted for, and introduced into the kingdom, *merely* by that one offering. The way to reconciliation was opened by the death of Christ ; but we are not saved by his life, till we livingly experience the work of salvation in our own particulars.”

Ib. 19.

And again, “ We do not hereby intend any ways to lessen or derogate from the atonement and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but on the contrary do magnify and exalt it. For as we believe all those things to have been certainly transacted which are recorded in the Holy Scriptures, concerning the birth, life, miracles, sufferings, resurrection and ascension of Christ, so we do also believe that it is the duty of every one to believe it, to whom it pleases God to reveal the same and to bring them to the knowledge of it.”—[*Barclay.*]

“ For (as saith the Apostle,) the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all that they which henceforth live should not live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.”

In reference to the *Universality of Divine Light and Grace*, we believe in accordance with the testimony of Robert Barclay :

“ That God, who, out of his infinite love sent his Son the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, who tasted death for every man, hath given to every man, whether Jew or

Gentile, Turk or Scythian, Indian or Barbarian, of whatsoever nation, country or place, a certain day or time of visitation, during which it is possible for him to be saved and to partake of the benefit of Christ's death. That for this end he hath communicated to every man, a measure of the light of his own Son, a measure of grace or of the Spirit, which the Scripture expresses by several names, as sometimes of the 'seed of the kingdom,' 'the light that makes all things manifest,' 'the word of God,' or 'the manifestation of the Spirit given to profit withal,' 'a talent,' 'a little leaven,' 'the gospel preached in every creature.'

"That God, in and by this light and seed, invites, calls, exhorts, and strives with every man, in order to save him; which as it is received and not resisted, works the salvation of all, even of those who are ignorant of the death and sufferings of Christ, and of Adam's fall; both by bringing them to a sense of their own misery, and to be sharers in the sufferings of Christ inwardly; and by making them partakers of his resurrection in becoming holy, pure and righteous, and recovered out of their sins. By which also are saved they that have the knowledge of Christ outwardly, in that it opens their understandings rightly to use and apply the things delivered in the Scriptures, and to receive the saving use of them. But that this may be resisted and rejected by both; in which then, God is said to be resisted and pressed down, and Christ to be again crucified and put to open shame, in and among men: and to those who thus resist and refuse him, he becomes their condemnation."

"We do not understand this divine principle to be any part of man's nature, nor yet to be any relic of any good which Adam lost by his fall, in that we make it a distinct and separate thing from man's soul, and all the faculties of it."

The Holy Scriptures.

"Concerning the *Holy Scriptures*, we believe they were given forth by the Holy Spirit of God, through the Holy men of God, who, as the Scripture itself declares, (2 Pet. 1: 21.) spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. We believe they are to be read, believed and fulfilled, (He that fulfils them is Christ,) and they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for in-

struction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, (2 Tim. 3 : 16, 17,) and are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (Ib. 15.) We believe the Holy Scriptures are the words of God, for it is said in Exodus 20 : 1, God spake all these words, saying, &c., meaning the ten commandments given forth on Mount Sinai ; and in Rev. 22 : 18, saith John, I testify to every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man addeth unto these—and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, (not the word,) &c. So in Luke 1 : 20, Because thou believest not my words—and in John 5 : 47, and 15 : 7, and 14 : 23, and 12 : 47, So that we call the Holy Scriptures, as Christ, the apostles and Holy men of God called them, viz., the words of God.”—[*G. Fox's Journal*, Vol. 2.]

“ Nevertheless, because they are only a declaration of the fountain, and not the fountain itself, therefore they are not to be esteemed the principal ground of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the adequate primary rule of faith and manners. Yet because they give a true and faithful testimony of the first foundation, they are and may be esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty ; for as by the inward testimony of the Spirit, we do alone truly know them, so they testify, That the Spirit is that Guide by which the saints are led into all truth ; therefore, according to the Scriptures, the Spirit is the first and principal leader. Seeing then that we do therefore receive and believe the Scriptures, because they proceed from the Spirit, for the very same reason is the Spirit more originally and principally the rule.”

“ Though then we do acknowledge the Scriptures to be very heavenly and divine writings, the use of them to be very comfortable and necessary to the Church of Christ, and that we also admire and give praise to the Lord, for his wonderful providence in preserving these writings so pure and uncorrupted as we have them, through so long a night of apostacy, to be a testimony of his truth against the wickedness and abominations even of those whom he made instrumental in preserving them, so that they have

kept them to be a witness against themselves."—[Barclay.]

It continues to be our unshaken faith that a measure of the same divine influence under which the Holy Scriptures were given forth, is indispensably necessary to a right understanding of them. With this we believe our early Friends were eminently favored, and that their writings contain those expositions of the truths of Holy Scripture which we do most firmly believe—and it is our earnest concern to commend these writings to the frequent and attentive perusal of Friends, as containing not only the doctrines held by our religious Society, but as practically exemplifying their application in life.

Concerning Justification,

In the words of Barclay, Friends believe that

"As many as resist not the light, but receive the same, it becomes in them an holy, pure, and spiritual birth, bringing forth holiness, righteousness, purity, and all those other blessed fruits which are acceptable to God: by which holy birth, to wit, Jesus Christ formed within us, and working his works in us, as we are sanctified, so are we justified in the sight of God, according to the Apostle's words; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."—1 Cor. 6: 11.

"Therefore it is not by our works wrought in our will, nor yet by good works considered as of themselves, but by Christ, who is both the *gift* and the *giver*, and the cause producing the effects in us; who, as he hath reconciled us while we were enemies, doth also in his wisdom save us and justify us after this manner, as saith the same Apostle elsewhere; according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."—Tit. 3: 5.

Justification is not to be realized but by that living faith which works by love and purifies the heart, an operative principle, the gift of God and not of ourselves—not an assent of the understanding merely to any de-

clared truths, but a living conviction wrought in the heart, by the operation of the Spirit of God.

From a *Confession of Faith*, by George Fox, "for the satisfaction of some tender, conscientious persons, who had heard false reports of him," we extract as follows, viz.:

"Touching the *resurrection*, it is a mystery which the carnal mind can never comprehend, but they that come to witness a part in the first resurrection, which is Christ Jesus, the Light of Life ; they in his light may come to perceive the mystery of the resurrection ; but if truth can be received and understood, then it will appear and be manifested to such, that I do not deny the resurrection, for I do verily believe that the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation ; but to fools that say that this body of natural flesh and bones shall be raised, I say, that body which is sown, is not that body that shall be ; but God giveth a body as it pleaseth him, yet to every seed its own body : now, there is the seed of the Serpent, and the Seed of Christ ; and they that can discern the body of each seed, are not the fools which are questioning how the dead shall be raised, and with what bodies they shall come ; for they know all mankind will be found to be one of these seeds, and that every seed shall have its own body."

Baptism.—As there is one Lord, and one faith, so there is but one *baptism*, of which that administered by John was a figure. It is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." This answer of a good conscience, can only be produced by the cleansing operations of the Holy Spirit in the heart ; subduing its froward nature, and bringing it into conformity to the divine will. The distinction between the baptism of John, which was with water, and that of Christ by his Spirit, is clearly marked by these expressions of John : "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than

I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear ; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire ; whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Matt. 3:11, 12. Here he inculcates that the baptism of Christ should winnow the soul of its chaffy or sinful nature ; and operate as fire to the perfect consumption of all its defilement. Spirit baptism is not connected with water baptism, nor at all dependent upon it. The baptism of the Saviour, which is the *one* baptism, is complete in itself without exterior form or shadow. It is well known by the experience of many, that this baptism is gradually effected by the spiritual immersions of the soul. A sense of its sinful condition, with the distance it stands at from the God of perfect purity, is first given it, whereby it is brought into self-abasement, contrition, and at length, into humble resignation of all to him. Thus, it becomes baptized into the similitude of the death of Christ. Through baptism also it riseth with him into newness of life, which enableth it to bring forth the fruits of the spirit, to his praise. To them who had thus followed Christ in the regeneration, the apostle said : “ Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” Col. 2:10, 11, 12. True Christian baptism is a great and important work : the work of Christ himself, whereby the soul is measurably baptized into his Spirit, and adorned with its virtues. “ As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.” Gal. 3:27. Such are, in degree, indued with his holy nature. For “ if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature ; old things are passed away ; behold all things are become new ; and all things are of God.” 2 Cor. 5:17, 18. See Phipps on Baptism.

Previously to entering upon their ministry, the apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost, through which they received power to fulfil the commission given to them in these words : “ Go ye therefore and teach all nations, bap-

tizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Wherever the gospel is really preached, it is preached baptizingly in a greater or less degree. It was the unction of the Holy Spirit accompanying their ministry, by which the apostles were enabled to teach, *baptizing* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : and it is only through the same medium that the same effect is produced in any degree, by the ministry of the gospel at the present day.—
[Testimony of Friends.]

Supper.—“Respecting the communion of the body and blood of Christ, we believe that it is inward and spiritual ; by which the inward man is daily nourished in the hearts of those in whom Christ dwells : of which the breaking of bread by the Lord Jesus, with his disciples, was a figure ; which they who had received the substance, used in the church for a time, for the sake of the weak, as they did some other outward observations. But the essential communion between Christ and his church, is only maintained by a real participation of his divine nature, through faith and obedience ; and is the supper alluded to in the Revelations : “Behold I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Rev. 3 : 20.

Worship.—“Being fully persuaded that man without the Spirit of Christ inwardly revealed, can do nothing to the glory of God, or to effect his own salvation, we believe that its divine influence is essentially necessary to the performance of the highest act of which the human mind is capable, even the worship of Almighty God, in spirit and in truth. To experience this essential qualification, it is our duty to retire inwardly to the measure of divine grace, patiently and reverently waiting upon the Lord, for his life-giving presence, by which we shall be furnished with a sense of what we need, and enabled to offer with acceptance that offering which he requires at our hands. And whether it may please the great Head of the church to authorize any vocal communication in our assemblies or not, yet those who are thus inwardly gathered, depending upon the teachings of the Holy Spirit, and waiting for the arising of his divine life, will wit-

ness a growth in the knowledge of the blessed truth—and be of the number of the true Worshippers whom the Father seeketh to worship him; “ who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

Although true worship is not restricted to time or place, yet we have ever believed it to be incumbent upon us to meet often together, in order to bear a public testimony of our dependence upon the Father of all our sure mercies, and to experience the renewal of spiritual strength. We would therefore affectionately exhort all our members, not to suffer the smallness of their numbers, or the improper influence of temporal things, to discourage them from constantly attending our religious meetings, but to remember that our Lord has declared, “ where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matt. 18: 20.

And we can feelingly bear our testimony to the preciousness of *silent* meetings, wherein as we are humbly concerned reverently to wait upon the Lord, He is often pleased in great mercy to draw near and to dispense to his dependent ones that bread that sustains the spiritual life, and that water that slakes the thirsty soul ; and we also unequivocally declare our belief that any change in our well known ancient mode of divine worship, will tend to endanger the very existence of our religious Society.

Ministry.—“ We believe that the authority and qualification for the ministry of the Gospel, is a special gift, dispensed by the Head of the church, to those whom he sanctifies, and prepares for the work, agreeably to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures. ‘ And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.’ Eph. 4: 11, 12. This gift cannot be exercised, but as the ministers are actuated and moved by the Spirit of Christ ; and minister under the renewed influences and openings thereof ; according to the apostolic injunction : ‘ If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God ; if any man minister, let him do it as of the

ability which God giveth ; that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ.' " 1 Pet. 4: 11.

" As this gift is freely received, so it is to be freely exercised, without coveting any man's silver or gold : not for the sake of popularity, nor restrained by the slavish fear of man, but in simple and humble obedience to the will of God."

" As it is the sole prerogative of the Head of the church, to qualify and send forth such as it pleases him, without respect to sex, worldly rank or human acquirements, he has conferred the gift of the ministry on *women* as well as men ; as foretold by the prophet Joel, and confirmed by the apostles of our Lord : " And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." Joel 2: 28.

" As by the *light* or *gift* of God all true knowledge in things spiritual is received and revealed, so by the same, as it is manifested and received in the heart, by the strength and power thereof, every true minister of the gospel is ordained, prepared, and supplied in the work of the ministry, and by the leading, moving and drawing hereof, ought every evangelist and *Christian pastor* to be led and ordered in his labour and work of the gospel, both as to the place where, as to the persons to whom, and as to the time wherein he is to minister. Moreover, they who have this authority may and ought to preach the gospel, though without human commission or literature ; as on the other hand, they who want the authority of this *divine gift*, however learned, or authorized by the *commission of men and churches*, are to be esteemed but as deceivers, and not true ministers of the gospel. Also they who have received this holy and unspotted gift, *as they have freely received it, so are they freely to give it.*"—[Barclay.]

Regarding the *solemn exercise of Prayer*, we hold that

" Although we are commanded to watch and pray continually, neither of which can be done without divine help, yet we believe that the solemn duty of vocal prayer requires a special impulse ; and in our addresses to the throne of Grace, it becomes us to remember that we are

but dust—that He who is ‘glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders,’ ought to be approached with holy fear and reverence. But we are emboldened to draw near to him in living faith, for ‘the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.’ And as he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God,’ we doubt not that those prayers which are put up under his divine influence, will be graciously answered.”—[*Test. of Friends in America.*]

We are very sensible and it is our practical belief, that true prayer consisteth not in any form of words, but in the aspirations of the soul, mentally experienced or vocally expressed, under the immediate influence of the Spirit of Christ.

On the First Day of the Week.

“We, not seeing any ground in Scripture for it, cannot be so superstitious as to believe, that either the Jewish Sabbath now continues, or that the first day of the week is the antetype thereof, on the true Christian Sabbath; which with Calvin we believe to have a more spiritual sense: and therefore we know of no moral obligation by the fourth command, or elsewhere, to keep the first day of the week more than any other, or any holiness inherent in it. But first, forasmuch as it is necessary that there be some time set apart for the saints to meet together to wait upon God; and that secondly, it is fit at sometimes they be freed from their other outward affairs; and that thirdly, reason and equity doth allow that servants and beasts have some time allowed them to be eased from their continual labor; and that fourthly, it appears that the apostles and primitive Christians did use the first day of the week for these purposes; we find ourselves sufficiently moved for these causes to do so also, without superstitiously straining the Scriptures for another reason; which, that it is not there to be found, many Protestants, yea, Calvin himself, upon the fourth command, hath abundantly evinced. And though we therefore meet, and abstain from working upon this day, yet doth that not

hinder us from having meetings also for worship at other times."—[*Barclay's Apology.*]

Our early friends were remarkable for the plainness and simplicity of their lives and conversation, in their conscientious testimony against the vanities, maxims and customs of the world, in their clothing, the furniture of their houses, and in all their appointments in life. We desire to continue steadfast in the support of these testimonies, believing them to be among the genuine fruits of the Spirit of Christ.

The foregoing extracts from the early writers of the Society of Friends, with the remarks accompanying them, contain declarations upon most of the subjects upon which our religious Society have heretofore declared their faith, and perhaps upon all, upon which it may be necessary for us now to treat. It may be added, however, that upon all the different doctrines and testimonies as held and supported by Friends, our views accord with those that are set forth in the well known and acknowledged writings of our religious Society.

We have thus, dear Friends, seriously and candidly declared our faith upon these various points of Christian Doctrine, and we entirely disclaim, and have invariably disclaimed all views and doctrines inconsistent therewith, from whatever source they may come, or by whomsoever they may be promulgated ; and we do not consider ourselves responsible for the writings of any individuals which have not received the approval of a meeting of the Society authorised to inspect and sanction writings on doctrines ; nor do we countenance the receiving of any sentiments which are at variance with those contained in our approved writers.

Having thus endeavored to discharge our religious duty in this respect, we desire to cultivate the disposition to leave the event to Him, who doeth all things well, with-

out whose notice not even a sparrow falleth to the ground, and who can turn the hearts of the children of men as it pleaseth Him.

May the unslumbering Shepherd of Israel watch over and preserve us, may his Almighty arm be underneath to sustain us, and may we one and all put our dependence entirely in Him.

At our Yearly Meeting of Friends for New-England, held on Rhode Island, from the 15th to the 23d, inclusive, of the sixth month, 1845—

The foregoing document, embracing the Doctrines of the Gospel as they ever have been, and are now most assuredly believed by the Society of Friends, was laid before us by the Committee appointed to take into solid and careful consideration, what they apprehend may be called for at our hands, under the present peculiar and trying circumstances in which we are placed ; and being read, was fully united with, and adopted by the Meeting, and declared to be its Faith upon the subjects on which it treats. And the Clerk was directed to sign the same on our behalf.

From the Minutes of said Meeting,

ABRAHAM SHEARMAN, Jun., Clerk.

HANNAH GOULD, Jun., Clerk.

REVIEW
=

OF A

INDICATION OF THE DISCIPLINARY

PROCEEDINGS

OF

NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING

OF

FRIENDS.



PHILADELPHIA:
T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS.
1852.

RE

R E V I E W.

THE legitimate objects of controversy are the propagation and the defence of truth. Whenever it is engaged in with any other view, as for the promotion of party purposes, or to screen measures justly liable to objection or censure from the condemnation they deserve, it is almost sure to betray those engaged in it into inconsistency, or lead them deeper into error. In religious societies, whose members are to be supposed united in one common faith, it would seem always to be deplored, on account of the jealousy and estrangement it too often effects among them, changing the zeal for truth into a strife for mastery. This seems to us especially to be dreaded when controversy occurs between the members of the highly professing Society of Friends, claiming, as it does, to have been placed by the Great Head, as a city set upon an hill, to show forth the spiritual nature of Christianity; the meekness, the gentleness, and the entire redemption from the world, of the true believer. Hence unity and harmony are indispensable to the full accomplishment of the great end for which it was raised up. "The servant of the Lord," said Paul to his beloved Timothy, "must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." Controversy may, then, be necessary; but it should not be commenced or persisted in unless important principles are at stake and in jeopardy; and it should never be allowed to degenerate into strife.

Occasions, however, as we have had sad reason to know, have occurred among Friends, and they may occur again, wherein

principles that had always been recognized as fixed in our faith, or in our system of church government, have been called in question, denied, or violated; and, unless the heresy or the departure from long-settled rules and usages were exposed, fears might be justly entertained lest there would follow a general lapse on the part of the Society from its long-avowed belief, or its long-established form of disciplinary proceedings. In such cases it becomes the duty of those who are desirous to retain our ancient faith and order inviolate, to stand forth in their defence; and, while manifesting the spirit of Him who intrusted both to the keeping of the Society, unhesitatingly to point out the inroad made, whether by open assault, or insidious undermining, and to contend unflinchingly for the right and the true.

It has been in order conscientiously to perform this duty, as we believe, that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, some years ago, issued its Appeal for the ancient doctrines of the religious Society of Friends, pointing out and condemning the unsound sentiments published to the world by two members, and attempted to be fastened on the Society as its modern and more enlightened faith; and also that the same body, more recently, having, for the purpose of arriving at a correct knowledge of the facts and circumstances that led to and accompanied the separation within the limits of New England Yearly Meeting, directed its Meeting for Sufferings to make an examination of the statements furnished by both bodies there, and to report to the Yearly Meeting; after considering and adopting the report prepared, forwarded copies of it to them respectively; with a minute, expressing "its sincere desire, that, under the heavenly influence of Divine love, all parties may be favored to be brought into true fellowship on the only sure foundation, so that we may be enabled to unite as brethren in the promotion of the blessed cause for which the Great Head of the Church raised us up as a people."

How this communication was received and treated by those bodies respectively, is generally known: the larger one refused to read it; the smaller one read it, and after some time had it printed and published; its contents thus became generally known throughout the Society.

Since then, which was in 1849, there have been two Con-

ferences held, of committees appointed by four of the Yearly Meetings on this continent, and by the larger body in New England, having for their avowed object "the restoration of that unity and Christian fellowship which formerly characterized the Society." Although they declined making any examination into the causes of the division in New England, yet both of these conferences have virtually indorsed the proceedings of those who now compose the larger body there, and consequently given their sanction to the principles involved in those proceedings, condemning the two Yearly Meetings which have felt themselves restrained from giving countenance to them. Within a short time past there has appeared a pamphlet entitled, "A Vindication of the Disciplinary Proceedings of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends," put forth under the authority of the Meeting for Sufferings, representing the larger body there, as attested by a minute appended thereto.

The object of this publication is stated to be "with a single eye to the clearing of the truth from all misconstruction," "briefly to review some of the positions which are taken in the 'Report,' respecting the disciplinary proceedings of this [New England] Yearly Meeting." The "Report" here alluded to, is that adopted by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in relation to the facts and causes of the division in New England Yearly Meeting, a copy of which we have mentioned as having been sent to each of the two bodies there. From the tenor of the Minute of the Meeting for Sufferings, we should not infer that the "Vindication" had been prepared by a committee of the body indorsing it, though it may have so been; but as they say it was "deliberately considered, approved, and adopted" by it; they, and those they represent, are fully committed to the principles and conclusions contained therein. And inasmuch as the authority of a Conference of committees of four Yearly Meetings may be appealed to as corroborating those principles and conclusions, it is a matter of no little importance and interest to every member of the Society, wherever situated, clearly to understand them and the consequences that may flow from them, before he makes up his mind either to accept or reject them. This may be our apology for offering the following remarks on the "Vindication," without waiting to see whether the meeting

whose report is thus reviewed, shall feel itself called on to take any step in the matter.

In whatever we may have to offer, as our object is solely the defence of what we believe to be the truth, we desire to keep our minds free from any feelings of unkindness towards those whose errors we are attempting to point out and correct; and to say nothing that can be justly charged with tending to separate more widely one part of the Society from the other.

We shall pass over with but little remark the several pages in the fore part of the "Vindication," containing extracts from the different publications put forth by members of the smaller body, given to show "that a spirit of disaffection, and alienation of mind from the body of Friends, a jealous disposition towards them, and a great lack of that love and unity, which, in accordance with the precepts of the gospel of Christ, our discipline enjoins, had existed with those who separated from us [the larger body] for many years." See page 13.

Had the "Vindication" afforded facts or reasoning to show that the charges of defection and intolerance contained in the extracts given, were untrue, and the grievances complained of groundless, there would have appeared some foundation for the inference which it strives to enforce, that the deplorable state which now exists in New England is to be altogether attributed to the smaller body, where they say: "When feelings such as are evinced in the extracts from the publications of the separatists which we have given, have taken root, and are cherished, what other fruits could be looked for, than such as have been brought forth? Alienation of brother from brother, and friend from friend, until open separation took place." See page 16.

Disaffection, and a great lack of love and unity, must of course have existed, where so great dissimilarity of opinion on highly important principles and acts, prevailed long enough to produce a disruption of the ties that had heretofore bound the parties together in one body. Both sides have sufficiently proved this, and the point of interest is, whether that disaffection was to the truth, or to error, and whether the lack of love and unity complained of, arose from an unwillingness to submit to what was right, or merely to the views and requirements of a party in power. Both parties have amply set forth the facts which they

believe connected more or less intimately with the origin and progress of the difficulties, and their final termination in a separation, together with the views which they respectively entertain relative to those facts, and the prominent actors in them; and we apprehend there are few who have taken the pains to make themselves acquainted with these facts and views, but who have come to a judgment in their own minds upon the case, which judgment we may hardly expect to confirm or alter. There are, however, we fully believe, a very large number of Friends who are ignorant of the facts connected with this separation, and we would they would give them a candid examination; but this is not the place to attempt a recital of them, and we shall, therefore, proceed at once to notice the objections raised to some of the principles laid down and enforced by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in its "Report."

In that "Report," the following paragraph occurs, page 29:—

"Although each Yearly Meeting is the judge of its own discipline, there is an understood and implied necessity of conforming in its decisions to principles of religious duty and Christian doctrine, *of civil liberty and constitutional rights common to us all, and always acknowledged and held inviolable by us.*"

After expressing their full approbation of the sentiments contained in the fore part of the paragraph, the "Vindication" says:—

"But how far the decisions of the Yearly Meeting upon the discipline of the Church may or should conform to the principles of 'civil liberty and constitutional right common to us all,' we think very questionable.

"By the principles of civil liberty, and of constitutional right, at least, in our own country, all men may worship God, in the manner and form they may judge their own consciences dictate, *but a member of our Religious Society, by becoming such, relinquishes this right, and agrees to our mode of worship; and if, in the exercise of his civil liberty and constitutional right, he should adopt any other mode of worship, he would become amenable to the discipline;—and surely it would be no valid plea against the exercise of the discipline, that, by the principles of civil liberty and constitutional right he might choose his own form of worship.*

“Again—by the principles of ‘civil liberty and constitutional right,’ a man may defend his life, or his possessions, by force of arms ;—yet, if a member of our body were to exercise this liberty, the judgment of the Church must needs be exercised upon him; and it would be no good plea for such an one to make, that such judgment was against the principles of ‘civil liberty and constitutional right.’” Page 19.

After all that the Society of Friends has passed through, to obtain and to maintain liberty of conscience, it would be an anomalous and most deplorable circumstance, were it correct, as is here asserted, that a member of our religious society, by becoming such, relinquishes the right to “worship God in the manner and form” that his conscience may dictate. There is no right for which our religious society has contended more determinedly, none for which its early members suffered more grievously, than that appertaining to all men, and in its character inalienable, of worshipping according to the dictates of conscience. “Liberty of conscience (says the Discipline of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting) being the common right of all men, and particularly essential to the well-being of religious societies, we hold it to be indispensably incumbent upon us to maintain it inviolably among ourselves.” Page 33. The truth of this is too well known to require proof; and we cannot but express our astonishment at finding in this day, those claiming to represent a large body of Friends, putting forth to the public a declaration so humiliating as the above; and if we must admit that it is correct as regards themselves, we must protest against its being received as true in relation to the Society at large.

The part of the quotation relative to civil liberty and constitutional right, evinces confusion of ideas, confounding the right of individuals as members of the community, and their rights as members of particular religious societies.

Every member of the community has the right, in accordance with the principles “of civil liberty and constitutional right common to us all,” to adopt and practice such belief and such mode of worship as he may deem just and proper; but he has no right, either civil or religious, to carry his belief or practice into the bosom of a society which does not unite with or approve of them; nor, if already a member of a religious society, has he any right,

civil or religious, to retain his membership, if his belief or practice are incompatible with the faith or discipline of that society, and it see fit to disown him; so that, even in the case supposed in the last paragraph of the extract, of a member of the religious Society of Friends defending "his life or his possessions by force of arms," "the judgment of the Church may be exercised upon him," and he disowned, without in any way interfering with his civil liberty and constitutional right. But in the proceedings instituted by any religious society to reclaim or to disown a delinquent member, there is, as the Report of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting asserts, an implied necessity for the Society, throughout the different stages of the case, to conform its measures and decisions to those "principles of civil liberty and constitutional right common to us all," and which, unless violated, secure to every individual his being dealt with according to the established rules and well-known usages of the Society with which he may be in membership. The support of this principle can in no way weaken the authority of societies over their members, and we cannot but hope that those who have advanced the sentiments on which we have made these comments, will, on further reflection, see, and acknowledge how great a lapse it is from primitive Quakerism, to deny to our members the right to worship the Almighty according to the dictates of their consciences, and to pronounce it "very questionable" how far the decisions of a Yearly Meeting or any other meeting, upon the discipline of the Church, should conform to the "principles of civil liberty and constitutional right common to us all."

The declaration made in the "Report," that "we are one people the world over," the authors of the "Vindication" accede to, "but (they say) we do not think it follows from this truth, as the 'Report' maintains, when two bodies come before a Yearly Meeting, both under the same title, and each claiming to be the co-ordinate branch of the Society bearing that name, that it is incumbent for such Yearly Meeting to inquire into the disciplinary proceedings of a co-ordinate Yearly Meeting, long established and always acknowledged."

The case will be more clearly understood by adhering to the language of the Philadelphia "Report" throughout, which is,

after the word "name" in the above extract; "it becomes its duty, under the guidance of Divine wisdom, to inquire into the circumstances of the case, so that it may not withhold from those to whom they belong, the precious rights and privileges which membership in our Society confers." This differs materially from the language used in the "Vindication," inasmuch as "inquiring into disciplinary proceedings" may or may not be necessary.

On the first page of the "Vindication," after speaking of the "Narrative of Facts and Circumstances," and the "Declaration of Faith," issued by the larger body in New England, they say:—

"The object the Yearly Meeting had in view in these publications was, that our members within our own borders, as well as *Friends generally in other Yearly Meetings, might be in possession of correct information as to the true causes* which had operated to produce a result so much to be regretted as a secession from the government and meetings of Friends, under the profession of holding to the faith, and supporting the discipline of the Society."

And again, on page 17, in reference to the "Narrative":—

"The principal object Friends of our Yearly Meeting had in view in the compilation of their 'Narrative,' was faithfully to record the workings of a spirit of disaffection and disunity, from its appearance among us, till its final consummation in an open separation from our Religious Body; *that Friends in other Yearly Meetings, as well as within our own limits, might be ascertained of those facts*, and be guarded, so far as the Yearly Meeting was enabled to do it, from a misrepresentation of them."

Now it does not seem to us reasonable, after making such statements as these, for the same body that prepared the publications alluded to, for the purpose here stated, to object "to Friends in other Yearly Meetings" examining them, in order to put themselves in "possession of correct information" relative to "the circumstances of the case;" the very purpose for which the authors say they were prepared and put forth. And "when two bodies come before a Yearly Meeting, both under the same title, and each claiming to be the co-ordinate branch of the So-

ciety bearing that name," both having published statements or narratives for the purpose of giving correct information upon the circumstances of the case, which is most consistent with justice and the duty of the Yearly Meeting, to hear only one side, or to hear both sides? or shall it close its ears and hear neither, deciding which it will acknowledge without making itself acquainted with any of the circumstances on either side?

But it is alleged that if a Yearly Meeting, so appealed to, undertakes to make itself acquainted with "the circumstances of the case," it may involve the necessity of inquiring "into the propriety or regularity of the disciplinary proceedings of a co-ordinate Yearly Meeting or its subordinate branches," [both bodies claim to be the co-ordinate Yearly Meeting,] and on page 4, of the "Vindication," it is said that such inquiry implies that those meetings must be amenable to the Yearly Meeting making the investigation. This latter, however, is a gratuitous assumption. Suppose the Yearly Meeting, upon an examination of the statements presented by both parties, should find that the causes which have produced the separation are inseparably connected with alleged violations of the discipline of the Society, involving fundamental principles of its church government, charged by the parties respectively on each other, it certainly may make such examination as to it may appear necessary, into the truth or error of these charges: but the examination is made solely to enable it (as the Philadelphia "Report" says), "under the guidance of Divine wisdom to come to a right decision for itself," so that it may not sanction such a departure from fundamental principles, should it be found to exist, nor do wrong by "withholding from those to whom they belong (whichever party it may be), the precious rights and privileges which membership in our Society confers." Having done this, its present duty is performed, and the wrong, if wrong has been done, must rest with the party inflicting it.

We think there need be but little said in relation to the explanation given in the "Vindication" on the first point mentioned in the Philadelphia "Report," as showing that important principles and usages of the Society, as well as private rights, had been disregarded, viz.:—

"In the attempt to procure the disownment of a minister in

the Society upon an accusation of detraction, and upon other charges, based upon or growing out of his endeavors, in accordance with what he believed to be his religious duty, to prevent the reception and spread of sentiments contained in printed doctrinal works, written and published by a Friend from England then in this country; which sentiments, in common with many other Friends, he believed to be opposed to the acknowledged doctrines of the Society.” *Vind.*, p. 21.

The “Vindication” reiterates the charge of detraction, and makes extracts from the discipline of New England, from William Penn’s works, and from I. Penington, to show the evils resulting from that vice, with which we can fully unite; but there is nothing to show that the alleged offence was other than what the Philadelphia “Report” represents it to have been.

The whole force of what is said on either side depends on the truth or error of the sentiment, that it is detraction to declare opinions unsound which are incompatible with the acknowledged faith of the Society, or the persons promulgating or defending such opinions to be unsound, or to labor to prevent the spread of such opinions, and to express disunity with those who support them. According as we assent to or dissent from this sentiment, will be the opinion entertained respecting the merits of the case alluded to. It is evident that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting does not assent to the truth of this sentiment, and hence in its “Report” it enforces the doctrine of Barclay as to the power of the Church to disown those who are unsound, and the obligation resting on all its members “to hold the right and shut out the wrong.” We have not been able to discover any testimony, from a trustworthy source, intended to fasten the charge of detraction on the party arraigned, which does not rest upon the assumption that the offence was committed by his “endeavors in accordance with what he believed to be his religious duty to prevent the reception and spread” of unsound doctrines; and any allegation to the contrary is sufficiently disproved by the fact, never denied, that when his appeal came before the Quarterly Meeting of Rhode Island; and he, knowing that his labors had been construed as defamation, claimed the right of objecting to such of the committee appointed in the case as he deemed unfit to serve; a right secured by the discipline of New England to those alone who have been disowned for detrac-

tion, it was denied to him by the meeting, as the discipline confers it; one of the Yearly Meeting's Committee giving as the reason, *that the complaint was not for detraction*; that if the word *detraction* was in the complaint, it was incidental, and hence it did not come within the meaning of the provision of the discipline. (See J. Wilbur's "Narrative," p. 109.) It seems not a little singular to us, to see introduced into the "Vindication" extracts from works published long since the case was finally decided by New England Yearly Meeting; and some of them at least not put forth by this individual, "statements (it says) to be sure put in print since the secession," but which are now put forth as though they were to be taken as proof of the truth of the "accusation" commented on in the Philadelphia "Report."

The "Vindication" unhesitatingly admits the correctness of the statement made in the second point of the "Report," viz.: "In the Committee of a Yearly Meeting summoning a member before it to answer certain charges made by it, dealing with him as an offender, and requiring him to make concessions to them, and endeavoring to induce him to sign a written acknowledgment drawn up by a part of their own body." It says: "That the appointment of this Committee was strictly in accordance with the usages of New England Yearly Meeting is certain. Similar Committees have been appointed by this Yearly Meeting, from time to time, since 1759, to the time of the separation." And then, in allusion to the authority and action of these Committees, as alluded to in the "Report," it says:—

"If, therefore, it be in accordance with the important principles and usages of the Society for the Yearly Meeting to appoint such Committees, and charge them with the duty of advising and laboring with both Meetings and individuals, it surely can be no disregard of such important principles and usages for such Committees to attend to their appointments, and faithfully labor for the upholding of our testimonies, and for the right administration of the discipline."

"This is precisely what the Committee of New England Yearly Meeting have done, and all they have done, in the case alluded to." P. 31.

We think no member who has any correct idea of the rights appertaining to his station in our religious Society, can need any

further evidence of how far "important principles and usages of the Society as well as private rights" are put in jeopardy, when such powers are accorded to and exercised by such Committees, than the simple statement of their proceedings as made in the Philadelphia "Report." If he does, let him bear in mind, what we shall in another place see maintained in the "Vindication," that these Committees carry with them the full authority of the Yearly Meeting.

The "Vindication" gives an explanation relative to the "written acknowledgment" alluded to in the "Report," which it represents as follows: "A Friend writes a letter to his friend, in which the latter thinks he perceives some paragraphs implicating him and other Friends. The writer disavows any intention of making such implications, and expresses his willingness to disavow in writing any intention of doing so. Whereupon, *at his request*, a paper is prepared containing such disavowal, which he then refuses to sign."

This seems but a small matter when considered as a transaction between two friends, though the friend written to would have been very unreasonable not to be satisfied with the verbal explanation; but it assumes a very different aspect when viewed, as it really was, a requisition made on a Friend of good standing, who had been summoned before a Committee of his Yearly Meeting to answer certain charges preferred against him, to acknowledge to the truth of part of those charges. Even if the transaction has been the simple affair the "Vindication" represents it, yet as a new feature in the powers assumed by a Committee of a Yearly Meeting, and one very liable to abuse, it would involve "important principles and usages of our Society," and ought not to be admitted; Monthly Meetings being the proper bodies to receive and judge of all acknowledgments. But the "acknowledgment" was not the simple affair which the authors of the "Vindication" seem now to suppose. The "Narrative" put forth by the Yearly Meeting of New England, before the separation, on page 15, says in reference to it, that, after the Friend implicated had requested the *Yearly Meeting's Committee* "to commit to paper what *they* wished him to sign," "the Committee adjourned to meet again the following morning, and in the recess the following paper [the acknowledgment] was pre-

pared with a hope that [he] *might be convinced of the propriety of signing it.*" And again, on page 16, "On presenting this essay [the acknowledgment] to him, *although the Committee thought it was so worded that he could hardly fail to receive it.*" The parts which we have italicised, show that the Committee that drew it up knew that it was not the simple explanation which the Friend had freely made before all the Committee, and which, on being asked by them, he expressed his entire willingness to have placed on paper, but something different, which they thought they had so worded that he "might be convinced of the propriety of signing it." And any one who will take the trouble to analyze the "paper" as published in the "Vindication," and examine the letter to which it alludes, can readily see that it is in reality an acknowledgment of error, so expressed as to be applied to nearly all, if not the whole, of the acts which had been construed by the Committee as the evidence of a wrong spirit, and deserving of church censure. We should not have noticed what is said respecting this acknowledgment so particularly, had it not been treated in the "Vindication" as a matter of no importance, and the question put: "Can our Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting seriously consider this transaction one of their reasons for manifesting disunity with the Yearly Meeting of New England?" We, of course, cannot answer for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting; we doubt not, however, that it has been *serious* in whatever reasons it has assigned for its disunity with the different violations of the order and usages of our religious Society which have produced the present division within the limits of New England Yearly Meeting.

The third point made in the Philadelphia "Report" is as follows:—

"In the same Committee's drawing up a charge against a member, bringing it immediately before his Monthly Meeting, and insisting upon its being recorded on the minutes, against the urgent request of the accused that it should be previously investigated; thereby assuming to itself functions which rightfully belong to the overseers and to the Preparative Meeting." P. 33.

To this the "Vindication" replies; that while it admits the course pursued was contrary to the usages of the Society, and that a charge against a member should undergo investigation,

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To the very important particulars contained in this specification, the "Vindication" attempts no direct reply, but says:—

By referring to the narrative part of the "Report," "embracing," as the authors state, "the facts in which both parties substantially agree"—we find it stated, that

"In the 7th month six of the Yearly Meeting's Committee met the Committee of nine appointed by the Monthly Meeting to attend to the case brought into the Meeting by the Yearly Meeting's Committee. The Yearly Meeting's Committee laid before this Committee of the Monthly Meeting their proof for establishing the correctness of their charge."

"How can it be said in accordance with this statement that the Yearly Meeting's Committee 'claimed the right to join the Committee of the Monthly Meeting in treating with the Friend?' or how can they be said to have disregarded any 'important principles and usages of the Society, or private rights?' On the contrary, it seems to us, that if they had failed to furnish proof of the correctness of the representation of the case which they had made to the Monthly Meeting, the Yearly Meeting's Committee would have failed in an important part of their duty, and might have been justly charged with disregarding 'private rights,' by making representations to the Monthly Meeting, respecting one of its members, of the truth of which they furnished no evidence." P. 36.

Now, the language of the Philadelphia "Report" is so plain and explicit as to what was alluded to in this fourth point, that it seems to us impossible for any one to suppose it to refer in any way to the efforts of the Yearly Meeting's Committee to *substantiate the charges* it had preferred against the Friend. The "Report" nowhere attempts to condemn them for so doing. The facts alluded to as "bringing the power and authority of the Yearly Meeting to bear upon the Monthly Meeting," were the claim set up by the Yearly Meeting's Committee, after having brought forward a charge against one of the members of a Monthly Meeting, and using all its efforts to establish his guilt, that they should be allowed to join the committee appointed by the meeting in judging of that charge; and to dictate what evidence the person accused should be permitted to produce, to

show his innocence. In reference to this latter point, the "Vindication" says:—

"They objected, to be sure, to an inquiry before the Committee of a Monthly Meeting appointed to treat with an alleged offender, as to the soundness or unsoundness of printed and published works on religious doctrines; and they objected properly; neither by the discipline nor the usages of the Society, are such committees constituted judges of such published doctrinal works; and in our view it would be dangerous to the peace and welfare of the Society that they should be so constituted. It seems to us that there would be great danger from such a course; that a varying and different standard would prevail in different Monthly Meetings." Page 36.

This is all correct enough when applied to judging respecting the "soundness or unsoundness of works on religious doctrines" offered or intended *for publication*; that duty, in this country, having been wisely confided to Meetings for Sufferings; in order that nothing may be thrown before the public by any of its members incompatible with the acknowledged faith of the Society. But to say that Monthly Meetings may not, under any circumstances, judge respecting the "soundness or unsoundness" of works already published, is a novel innovation upon the long-established practice of the Society, and if carried out must lay waste "important principles and usages of the Society as well as private rights." One of the queries addressed to Monthly Meetings (we suppose in New England as well as elsewhere), inquires whether Friends are careful to restrain those under their care from reading pernicious books? How is this to be answered if Monthly Meetings have no right to judge of works already published whether they are pernicious or not? What more pernicious books are there than those that lay waste the precious doctrines of the Society? And are overseers and Monthly Meetings to fold their hands, and see the members disseminating works calculated to effect disorganization and unbelief, without making an attempt to arrest the evil, because the authority to judge of works on doctrines *offered for publication* is intrusted to the Meeting for Sufferings? Such an assumption cannot be admitted for a moment. Monthly Meetings are constantly called on to judge respecting doctrines, both in

receiving and in disowning members, and it would work an entire revolution in the Society if that power was taken from them.

If a member should by preaching or conversation promulgate unsound doctrine, our friends in New England would, we suppose, admit that he ought to be taken under dealing, and, if not reclaimed, be disowned; but if he by publishing or by circulating and recommending works already published, inculcates sentiments altogether opposed to and subversive of the acknowledged faith of the Society, Monthly Meetings, they say, are "neither by the discipline nor the usages of the Society" constituted judges of such doctrinal works, "and it would be dangerous to the peace and welfare of the Society that they should be so constituted," and consequently they must exercise no jurisdiction in the case, and the unsound member may go on endeavoring to overturn the faith of the Society with impunity until the Meeting for Sufferings gives a judgment in the case, which it may never do. Nay, further, according to the views laid down in the "Vindication," if a minister or other member, under a religious concern to prevent the spread of unsound doctrines, and to preserve the Society, declares the individual publishing or spreading such unsound works to be an offender, if he warns his fellow-members against imbibing the unsound sentiments contained in the works he is disseminating, makes extracts from them to show in what their unsoundness consists, and declares that those who uphold and defend the author of such works are giving countenance to unsound sentiments; such an one for so doing renders himself liable to a charge of defamation, and may be prevented from bringing proof of his innocence, because he has no right, when before the Committee of his Monthly Meeting, to refer to the works published in order to show the unsoundness of the sentiments contained in them, and which he was opposing; and so he may be disowned, while the author escapes uncensured.

Let it not be supposed that this is carrying the principle laid down in the "Vindication" to an absurd extreme, which it is not probable could ever occur. It is precisely descriptive of the case that was then at issue before the Monthly Meeting's Committee. The Friend arraigned before them was accused of defamation; his plea of innocence rested upon the alleged fact that

all he had said or done was to oppose the spread of unsound sentiments contained in certain works published by a member, and he appealed to the works themselves to prove the unsoundness of the views that he had labored to prevent the Society from sanctioning. The Yearly Meeting's Committee, who were his accusers, and who had just "laid before the Committee of the Monthly Meetings whatever proof they thought necessary for establishing the correctness of their charge," now claimed the right of joining the latter Committee in judging in the case, and refused to the accused the right of making his defence in his own way, and of explaining the ground on which he had acted in the discharge of what he apprehended to be his duty, by any reference to the works containing the unsound sentiments; taking the position contended for in the "*Vindication*," and declaring that the Monthly Meeting's Committee had no right to judge respecting the soundness or unsoundness of "published doctrinal works;" and of course, so far as their authority extended, they left the Monthly Meeting no data upon which it could come to a conclusion whether its member had or had not been guilty of detraction; and although it exonerated him from all blame, yet through the action of the Quarterly Meeting, and the Yearly Meeting's Committee, he was finally disowned, while the author of the works containing the unsound sentiments retained all his rights as a member.

Is it to be marvelled at, that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting declares that, in so doing, "important principles and usages of the Society as well as private rights were disregarded?"

The fifth point raised in the Philadelphia "*Report*," wherein they think important principles and usages are disregarded, is as follows:—

"*Fifth.* In the same Committee's objecting at a subsequent Monthly Meeting to the reception and adoption of a Report signed by seven of the Committee who had investigated the case, and declared that the charges had not been sustained, while they advised the reading of a report of an opposite character signed by two of the Monthly Meeting's Committee, although it was strongly objected to in the meeting." *Vind.*, p. 37.

To this the "*Vindication*" replies:—

"Whether, by thus objecting to the Report of the seven—

‘important principles and usages of the Society’ were disregarded—or whether, by such a course, such principles and usages were advocated and maintained, must necessarily depend upon the nature of the report itself, and upon what principles and usages that was founded.” *Vind.*, p. 37.

It then goes into an examination of the “Report signed by seven of the committee who had investigated the case and declared *that the charges had not been sustained.*” That Report, in giving the *origin* of the complaint against the Friend, says it *originated* on account of his “labors under an apprehension of religious duty, and in conformity with our Christian discipline against the introduction into our Society of defective principles and doctrines, and for the preservation of those ancient testimonies of truth committed to us as a people.” This account of the *origin of the charge*, the “Vindication” construes into the Friend’s sole *defence* against the several items contained in that charge; and goes on to argue that the reprehensible acts are not denied, but admitted, and that it is “the doctrine of the Report of the seven” that a member may do all that was charged against that Friend, and be justified therein, if it was done under a *profession* of “labors under an apprehension of religious duty.” This is altogether a mistake; for immediately preceding the part of the Report speaking of the *origin* of the charge, the Committee say: “Upon a full and deliberate investigation of the case, our judgment is that the charges against the Friend *have not been sustained*, but that *his defence* is sufficient to exonerate him from the same.” The only way to account for this important mistake, is by the fact mentioned in the “Narrative of Facts and Circumstances,” that, after the Yearly Meeting’s Committee had brought forward its proof of the charges it had preferred, on finding that the Monthly Meeting’s Committee were willing to hear whatever the accused thought essential to prove his innocence, it left abruptly, and never heard the defence that was made; and the “Vindication” now assumes that the several items were not disproved.

But this is not the point to which the Philadelphia “Report” alludes as manifesting a disregard of important principles, &c., as is evident from the language used. It is the course pursued by the Yearly Meeting’s Committee—going into the Monthly

Meeting, to whose care and judgment they had submitted the case of one of its members, and while occupying the position of his accusers, using all the influence their appointment conferred on them to prevent the meeting from receiving and adopting the report of its own committee; and striving to coerce it to adopt or record a report from a small fraction of that committee, because it condemned the Friend they were seeking to have disowned; thus endeavoring to constitute themselves, though but appointed to give advice, the executive branch of the Society—the judges as well as accusers. Truly does the Philadelphia "Report" say: "Such a proceeding in treating with offenders is, we think, contrary to any practice in the Society that we have ever been acquainted with; the principle governing in such cases being that of leaning to the side of mercy and forbearance."

The sixth point made in the "Report," as evidence of a disregard of important principles and usages of the Society, is as follows:—

"In the attempt made, first, by the Quarterly Meeting's Committee, and afterwards by the Quarterly Meeting itself, to render null and void the minute of South Kingston Monthly Meeting, which accepted the Report in the case of the Friend alluded to, dismissed the charge against him, and restored him to all his rights as a member and minister; and in afterwards taking up his case by another Monthly Meeting on the same charge, and then disowning him without even going through the regular course prescribed by the discipline." *Vind.* p. 40.

In its comments upon the above, the Philadelphia "Report" says: "It is a great maxim of law and justice that where a man has been tried and acquitted, he cannot be tried again for the same offence." This, replies the "Vindication," is "a maxim of policy merely; absolute justice requires that the really innocent should be held innocent; and the really guilty should be so held;" and if we admit this maxim, we must also admit that the first trial must be a perfect trial—the tribunal a competent one; and the judgment rendered conformable to law. It then alleges that the competency of the tribunal in the case alluded to, "is impeached:" the Quarterly Meeting having decided that the Monthly Meeting was not in a suitable state to conduct the affairs of the Church; and secondly, there was an error in the

proceedings, "inasmuch as the judgment was rendered in direct opposition to the advice of Committees of the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings, appointed to *advise and assist that Monthly Meeting*," therefore there was no legal trial.

Now let us see how far the facts of the case correspond with this reasoning. The Yearly Meeting's Committee drew up the charge against the Friend, and carried it to his Monthly Meeting. The Meeting was anxious not to take it on its minutes unless it first passed through the usual channel; but the Yearly Meeting's Committee threatened it, that, unless it took action in the case, it would be complained of to its Quarterly Meeting. Here was a plain, undeniable acknowledgment of the competence of the tribunal. The same Committee, together with a Committee of the Quarterly Meeting, followed the case throughout all its stages, and never questioned the competence of the tribunal until after the case was decided; and at the time the case was decided, so far from calling the authority or competence of the Meeting into question, both the Yearly Meeting's and the Quarterly Meeting's Committees, strove to induce the Meeting to accept the report of the two members of its committee, as a final settlement of the case; and when the Meeting decided to adopt the Report of the seven, they expressed their concern, that the Friend was thereby "restored to membership." The idea of incompetence in the tribunal had not then occurred; would it ever have been started had the decision been different? In order that "opposition to the advice" of these two committees should constitute an error in the proceedings, sufficient to invalidate the final judgment, there must be some law making it obligatory on the Meeting to adopt such advice in such a case: but no such law exists, nor is there any attempt in the "Vindication" to assert or to show that there is. The whole course of the Yearly and Quarterly Meeting's Committees conclusively shows that they considered the proceedings valid and conclusive, until the final decision took place. The judgment come to in the case, as it was contrary neither to the doctrines, the testimonies, nor the discipline of the Society, could not itself vitiate the previous proceedings.

"But (says the Vindication), we hold that the maxim of law, that an acquittal after a legal trial is a bar to a subsequent trial for the same offence, is not a maxim of essential justice, nor can it be applied to cases of dealing with offenders in our religious

Society, without consequences totally subversive of the essential objects of our religious compact."

We must recur to one of the first assertions made in the "Vindication," and on which we have had occasion to remark, in order to account for the entire disregard for "private rights" manifested in this quotation; and that is, the assertion that it is "very questionable how far the decisions of a Yearly Meeting (and consequently its subordinate meetings) upon the discipline of the church, should conform to the principle of civil liberty and constitutional right common to us all." We are unwilling to believe that this doubt exists in the mind of Friends generally, but that they will acknowledge to the truth contained in the following language of the Philadelphia "Report:" "The Society of Friends has always guarded with scrupulous care the rights of its members. It has carefully avoided seeking to make a man an offender, and even when a Friend has directly violated the discipline, if he has not been treated with in conformity with its provisions and order, he is, *where justice is done him*, reinstated on his appeal. It is an acknowledged principle among Friends, that it is better an offender should escape disownment, than that his rights, guaranteed by the discipline, should be disregarded. For if meetings and committees do not keep to the discipline themselves, under the direction of the Head of the church, on what right ground can an individual be disowned for his error?" If then it is true, and we believe the practice of all the Yearly Meetings of Friends confirm it, that an acknowledged offender, if he has not been treated with in conformity with the provisions and order of the discipline, is, on his appeal, where justice is done him, reinstated; no plea of necessity or expediency can be admitted, for such an entire disregard of "important principles and usages of the Society, as well as private rights," as to proceed to try a Friend a second time after the charges preferred against him have once been fully and fairly investigated by the Committee appointed for that purpose, and declared "not to have been sustained," and his meeting come to the conclusion to restore him to his rights as a member. Surely, for another Monthly Meeting to take up his case on the same charges, and disown him, without even going through the regular course prescribed by the discipline, must be regarded "as at variance with

the organization and discipline of the Society." But, says the "Vindication," "if Monthly Meetings through weakness or any other cause justify wrong, or fail to testify against it, how can the Society say that their testimony to the necessity of a Christian life and conversation is consistently borne?"

The discipline points out the way in which such an evil as is here spoken of is to be reached. Let its superior meeting take it under care, and in treating with it, adhere to the discipline and order of the Society, and then the testimony of the Society can be supported, while no important principles will be disregarded, and no private right invaded.

Upon the seventh point stated in the Philadelphia "Report," as evincing a disregard for important principles, &c., clear and undeniable as it appears to us to be, the "Vindication" dwells longer than on any other. It is as follows:—

"In disregarding the provisions of the discipline of New England Yearly Meeting, in the manner of laying down South Kingston Monthly Meeting, by Rhode Island Quarter, and attaching its members to Greenwich Monthly Meeting." *Vind.*, p. 43.

In order to rebut the force of this specification, the "Vindication" enters into an elaborate elucidation of what we suppose will be admitted by all—the subordination of meetings; and quotes from the New England Discipline, the clause recognizing and affirming that subordination, "so that if at any time the Yearly Meeting be dissatisfied with the proceedings of any of the said meetings, or the Quarterly Meeting with the proceedings of any of the Monthly Meetings, or the Monthly Meeting with the proceedings of any of the Preparative Meetings within its limits, such meetings ought with readiness and meekness to render a satisfactory account accordingly."

"All this (it says) has been done, and never has the power so to do by these meetings been doubted or questioned." This we believe is entirely correct, and we cannot therefore see the necessity for entering into any argument to prove it. The question is then put: "What then is there in the discipline to limit this general power?" and they quote the clause of the discipline given in the Philadelphia "Report," which is as follows:—

"When a Quarterly Meeting hath come to a judgment respecting any difference, relative to any Monthly Meeting belonging to them, and notified the same in writing to such Monthly

Meeting, the said Monthly Meeting ought to submit to the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting; but if such Monthly Meeting shall not be satisfied therewith, then the Monthly Meeting may appeal to the Yearly Meeting, against the judgment and determination of the Quarterly Meeting. And if a Monthly Meeting shall *refuse* to take the advice and submit to the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting, and, notwithstanding, *will not appeal* against the determination of the said Meeting, to the Yearly Meeting; *in such case*, the Quarterly Meeting shall be at liberty either to dissolve such Monthly Meeting, or bring the affair before the next or succeeding Yearly Meeting. And in case a Quarterly Meeting shall dissolve a Monthly Meeting, the dissolved Monthly Meeting, or any part thereof, in the name of the said Meeting, shall be at liberty to appeal to the next or succeeding Yearly Meeting, against such dissolution; but if the dissolved Monthly Meeting, or a part thereof in its behalf, *shall not appeal* to the Yearly Meeting, the Quarterly Meeting shall join the members of the said late Monthly Meeting, to such other Monthly Meeting as they may think most convenient; and until such time, shall take care that no inconvenience doth thereby ensue to the members of such dissolved meeting, respecting any branch of our discipline."

"This portion of discipline (says the "Vindication") was adopted, as appears by the date appended to it, in 1743. That portion which we have before quoted was adopted much later, to wit, in 1760. If, therefore, there be any doubt of the entire harmony of the two portions quoted, that last established must by all rules of proper interpretation take precedence.

"We think there is no such want of harmony."

We also think there is no such want of harmony. And we would remark, before going further, that we think it is a mistake in supposing the clause last quoted is intended to *limit* the power *given by the other portion of the discipline*, to Quarterly Meetings over their subordinate meetings, but merely to point out the *manner* in which a Quarterly Meeting is to proceed to exercise that power, so far as to lay down a Monthly Meeting. This is plain, not only from the whole tenor of its provisions, but the first paragraph in it shows that it was intended to apply to any and every case, viz.: "When a Quarterly Meeting has

come to a judgment respecting *any difference*, relative to *any Monthly Meeting* belonging to them." Besides, its whole provisions bear upon, and regulate the most important and responsible act, involving the organization of the Society, which a Quarterly Meeting can perform, and being expressly intended for that purpose, and no other portion of the discipline referring to the subject, or intimating *how* that power of the superior Meeting is to be exercised, it must necessarily apply to every case, and thereby take away every "doubt of entire harmony" between different parts of the discipline.

But, says the "Vindication," "It seems to us that it (the last clause quoted) was intended to apply to a particular case and state of things in a Monthly Meeting;" which it supposes to be, where "there exists in the Monthly Meeting a difference which they are unable to reconcile, and which requires the care of the Quarterly Meeting: a difference which obstructs the regular exercise of the discipline." Now we cannot suppose *any* case that *could* occur in a Monthly Meeting, which proceeded to disturb it so far as to require the care of its Quarterly Meeting, but what is just such an one as the "Vindication" describes as requiring to be treated under the provisions of this section of the discipline. It certainly is precisely the condition which the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings' Committees represented as existing in South Kingston Monthly Meeting. Thus the former committee, in the communication to Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, respecting that Monthly Meeting, says, that "from the *want of love and unity*, and the spirit of insubordination amongst them, in the management of the concerns of the Society, they are not in a suitable state to conduct the affairs of the church to the honor of truth," and require the care of the Quarterly Meeting. (See "Narrative," page 24.) The Quarterly Meeting's Committee, in its communication to this Monthly Meeting (see *ibid.*, page 27); speaks of proceedings in the Monthly Meeting, "which have had the effect to produce the present unhappy *differences existing in that meeting*," and which they represent "as obstructing the regular exercise of the discipline," and the Quarterly Meeting had taken it under care. So that, did the provisions of this discipline apply, as "it seems" to the authors of the "Vindication," only to such a case as is de-

scribed, according to their own showing, the case of South Kingston Monthly Meeting was precisely such an one; and therefore, by disregarding those provisions, "important principles and usages of the Society" have been entirely set at naught.

The "Vindication" then states a hypothetical case, in which a "Monthly Meeting, or so considerable a number of such meeting, as that they should control its proceedings, should wholly depart from our religious profession in any essential particulars," and sets forth how much time might be consumed, if the provisions of this part of the discipline were regarded, before such Monthly Meeting could be laid down, during which time it would be exercising the powers of a Monthly Meeting; and then says: "Surely no one can believe that the discipline would countenance, or was intended to countenance a proceeding like this." We suppose it did not intend to countenance such a proceeding, but what has that to do with the case which the Philadelphia "Report" specifies, viz., that of South Kingston? There is no similarity between the case supposed and the one in point. According to their own supposition, there are cases to which this rule does apply, and of course, in these, however aggravated, the same length of time might elapse before the Monthly Meeting could be laid down, as in the case just stated, and we must "believe that the discipline intended to countenance" *such delay* in these cases, or it would not have enjoined it. But if the discipline of New England is so defective as to admit of improper delay occurring in an extreme case, let it be amended in the proper way and at the proper time; but while it continues as it is, it cannot be admitted that it may be violated whenever its observance may be deemed inconvenient. The same inconvenience might attend the enforcement of the discipline in almost every other point, and thus render it a dead letter. The "Vindication" goes on to say, that

"The position taken in the 'Report,' is, that, in the laying down of South Kingston Monthly Meeting, and immediately annexing its members to that of Greenwich, 'important principles and usages of the Society, as well as private rights, have been disregarded,' (*Vind.*, page 49;) and then recites the case of Green Street Monthly Meeting, which, under the authority of the discipline of its Yearly Meeting, in relation to the subordi-

nation of Meetings, was laid down by Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting in 1827: the rectitude and propriety of which proceeding, it says, was never questioned by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and asks, "With what propriety, then, can New England Yearly Meeting be called upon to concede, that a measure which in one Yearly Meeting is right and proper, and in accordance with the 'principles of religious duty and Christian doctrine; of civil liberty and constitutional right common to us all,' can have so far changed its character as to be in disregard of such principles when adopted in another Yearly Meeting, even if there be a reasonable doubt as to the meaning of a clause of the discipline of the latter, and its applicability to the case *which relates simply to the manner of proceeding, in the laying down of a Monthly Meeting, and annexing its members to other Monthly Meetings?*" *Vind.*, p. 40.

The assertion, that "the position taken in the 'Report,' is, that in the *laying down* of South Kingston Monthly Meeting, &c., important principles, &c., have been disregarded," is a mistake. The position is, that in disregarding the provisions of the discipline of New England, *in the manner* of laying down South Kingston Monthly Meeting, important principles, &c., have been disregarded; and this is an important distinction, which destroys the analogy between that case and the case of Green Street Monthly Meeting, laid down by Philadelphia Quarter. In Philadelphia Yearly Meeting there is no discipline prescribing *the manner* in which a Quarterly Meeting must proceed; in laying down a Monthly Meeting; consequently, the discipline was not violated. "The principles of religious duty and Christian doctrine—of civil liberty and constitutional rights, common to us all," were not infringed, and hence the reason why "the rectitude and propriety of the proceedings" cannot be called in question. But in New England, as we have seen, the discipline is explicit, as to *the manner* in which the act is to be accomplished, and the subordinate meetings have the right to expect and insist that their superior meetings shall comply with the discipline in that respect, as in all others; "for if meetings and committees do not keep to the discipline themselves, under the direction of the Head of the Church, on what ground can an individual be disowned for his error?"

It is evident that the reasoning on this point in the "Vindica-

tion" does not satisfy its authors themselves, and they therefore proceed in an attempt to reconcile the course pursued by Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, with the requisitions of this clause of the discipline. In order to do this, the position is assumed, that the judgment of a Committee of a Meeting, is virtually the judgment of the Meeting appointing the Committee.

"South Kingston Monthly Meeting (they say) had received in writing the judgment of a Committee of the Quarterly Meeting appointed to advise them—on its behalf. Is it, then, an 'assumption,' as the 'Report' holds, 'which would totally change the long-established practice of the Society,' to consider this judgment in effect if not in form as the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting?" *Vind.*, p. 52.

They argue that inasmuch as the discipline of New England Yearly Meeting provides that a superior Meeting to which an appeal is made, "Is to take said appeal into consideration, and determine thereon *by a committee* to be appointed for that purpose;" and because "the acts" of the Meeting for Sufferings "within their powers, are the acts of the Yearly Meeting in effect;" therefore, it is not "an assumption, as the Philadelphia 'Report' holds," to consider the judgment of a committee tantamount to the judgment of the meeting appointing it; and that, acting on this principle in the dissolution of South Kingston Monthly Meeting, "cannot and ought not to be stamped as a departure from the 'principles of religious duty or Christian doctrine'—or from any principles of 'civil liberty or constitutional right,' applicable to the disciplinary proceedings of our Society, or 'common to us all,' as members of the Society." *Vind.*, p. 53..

We shall not stop to demonstrate the wide difference between the general principle thus laid down in the "Vindication," and the examples they have given, where the *discipline* confers extraordinary powers on committees for particular specified purposes. The want of similarity will, we think, suggest itself at once to every person of ordinary perception. It is not pretended that the minute appointing the committee of Rhode Island Quarter, to render advice and assistance to South Kingston Monthly Meeting conferred any extraordinary powers upon it.

This principle, then, which was claimed as imperative by New

England Yearly Meeting before the separation, as is shown in the "Narrative of Facts and Circumstances," (page 28,) and is now again insisted on by the body which "deliberately considered, approved, and adopted" the "Vindication," must be considered a settled principle in their system of church government. How far it is correct that it would, if generally received and acted on, "totally change the long-established practice of the Society," as is asserted in the Philadelphia "Report," it needs not many words to show. Committees are appointed in Monthly Meetings to treat with those who have violated the discipline; if the principle contended for is correct, the committee may come to a judgment against or in favor of the individual, and inform him thereof, before the case is reported on by them to the meeting; and their judgment being of equal authority with that of the meeting, they will virtually restore or disown him, as they may see fit. Thus the rights of members would be altogether at the mercy of their fellow members appointed on such committees. Monthly Meetings would not know how long they would be allowed to exercise their functions as the executive branches of the Society, whenever Committees might be appointed by their Quarters, to advise and assist them. The whole authority of the meeting appointing them being lodged in the hands of such committees within the limits of those Yearly Meetings which prescribe no specific mode for laying down a Monthly Meeting, they might dissolve a Monthly Meeting in the most summary manner; or, as done in the case of South Kingston, oblige them to mutilate their records by erasing such minutes as they disapprove. But this power would be still more fearful in the hands of a Committee of a Yearly Meeting. We have set forth, in the "Vindication," what acts are considered by those who approved and adopted it, as coming within the proper and legitimate duties of such a Committee, as was appointed by New England Yearly Meeting in 1840, "to assist and advise such meetings and members as circumstances may require and way may open for," (see "Narrative of Facts," &c., page 14,) viz.: Summoning a member before it to answer certain charges made by it; dealing with him, and requiring him to make an acknowledgment. Drawing up a charge against a member, taking it into his Monthly Meeting, and

obliging the Monthly Meeting to take it on its minutes without previously receiving the care of overseers or Preparative Meeting; claiming the right to join the Committee of the Monthly Meeting appointed to investigate the case of a member, against whom they had preferred a charge, in judging of his case; refusing the accused the right to bring forward such evidence as he thought essential to show his innocence, and that he was acting strictly in accordance with the discipline; denying a Monthly Meeting any authority to judge of the soundness or unsoundness of the doctrines published in any book; and requiring it to reject or adopt whatever report from a Committee treating with a member, the said Committee may think right. Dictating to Monthly Meetings whom they shall have as clerks or overseers, and obliging them to erase from their records such minutes as they may not wish to be retained. If these are the duties which such a Committee may rightfully perform, as the "Vindication" asserts; and if, in the performance of them, it carries with it the authority of the Yearly Meeting, what is left for the meetings they visit to do, but to register their decrees? Of what possible use can the discipline, the *lex scripta*, be in protecting the rights of members? In the case of appeal by South Kingston Monthly Meeting, from the decision of Rhode Island Quarter, one of the Quarterly Meeting's Committee, when pleading the correctness of the proceedings of the Quarterly Meeting, contended "that the Yearly Meeting's Committee, being appointed directly by the Yearly Meeting, *any advice coming from them had all the authority of discipline* (see J. Wilbur's "Narrative," page 130), and according to the principle laid down in the "Vindication," he was right; so that, where such a Committee fails to find discipline ready-made to suit their purposes, they have nothing to do but to manufacture it for the occasion. Grant this principle, which is now the acknowledged rule with those who have put forth the "Vindication," and by which they contend that the provision of the discipline requiring a Quarterly Meeting as the first step towards the dissolution of a Monthly Meeting, to notify the Monthly Meeting in writing, of the judgment it may have come to respecting any difference existing in it, was complied with by Rhode Island Quarter in the case of South Kingston, inasmuch

as a portion of its Committee, appointed months before, presented to that Monthly Meeting its judgment in the case, which judgment must be received as that of the Quarterly Meeting, and we hesitate not to say that it will, in its operation, leave no ground upon which the rights of members, and the legitimate impartial action of subordinate meetings can rest, or be maintained. The right of appeal, if not annihilated, would be a mockery, and all power would ultimately centre in the hands of certain individuals in the respective Yearly Meetings, who, once placed on their Committees to advise and assist meetings and members, could effectually repress all complaints against their encroachments, and retain their authority until they chose voluntarily to give it up. It is vain to say that, in such a Society as that of Friends, such usurpation and injustice would never be attempted, or, if they were, they could not be submitted to. The principle once established, no one can predict where its operation would stop. In New England Yearly Meeting, it is alleged by those who have put forth the "Vindication," that it has been admitted and acted on for years; and what have been the consequences resulting from its application there? Are they such as to induce the whole Society to indorse and sanction it?

The introduction and spread in the Society of the unsound views published by two members in England, and the efforts made, if not to sanction those views, at least to screen them from condemnation, and to uphold their authors, have been the primary causes of the difficulties and divisions now existing throughout the Society. They are the natural and inevitable consequences of an attempt, or even of an apparent attempt, to impair the faith of such a people as Friends are. We know too well and too generally the purity of life, the devotion, and the deep religious experience of those who have been styled the founders of our Society, and the bitter persecution and dreadful sufferings they passed through while preaching its faith to a benighted world, to be brought universally to believe that they were deceived or uninstructed in the truths of the gospel. Moreover, all those among us who have been made willing to walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing, that is, the Spirit of Truth, which they did, come experimentally to know

an establishment in the same doctrine and testimonies, and that they are no cunningly devised fables, but the unchangeable truth; and they dare do no other than condemn and oppose every attempted innovation upon them. Therefore, while any countenance or connive at such innovations, or resist the testimony of truth from going forth against them—there will be controversy, there will be disunity and distrust, until the Society, in all its component parts, clears itself of the heresy. And this state of things exists within its borders now, calling for earnest, affectionate, brotherly, but uncompromising labor to remove it. But apart from this, we do not hesitate to say that the working of this principle of the plenary power of a Yearly Meeting's Committee, has been the prolific source of the troubles terminating in a separation in New England, and the interruption of that harmony which had heretofore existed between the different Yearly Meetings. It is inseparably connected with a “disregard of important principles and usages of the Society, as well as private rights,” to which, we trust, some of them at least, will never give their sanction, even by implication.

We now come to the last point mentioned in the “Report,” as involving a disregard of important principles, and which is as follows:—

“In the manner in which the members of the Quarterly Meeting's Committee interfered to produce a separation in Swanzey Monthly Meeting.”

“And here (the ‘Vindication’ says), our Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting have fallen into an error, quite important to a true understanding of the state of things at Swanzey Monthly Meeting, when the separation took place. They state in substance that the person who had for some years previous acted as clerk, was acknowledged by both ‘parties’ to have been in that station when the Meeting adjourned the month before. New England Yearly Meeting do not and never have so acknowledged.”

It is not necessary to go into any analysis here of the statement made by the parties respectively, of the transactions in Swanzey Monthly Meeting relative to the appointment of a clerk to that meeting; they are fully set forth in the Philadelphia “Report,” and every one can draw his own conclusions

therefrom. The principal discrepancy between them is, that both bodies claim to have been respectively supported in the course they pursued by the greater part of the Monthly Meeting. The statement in the Philadelphia "Report," "that the person who had, for some years previous, acted as clerk, was acknowledged, by *both parties*, to have been in that station when the meeting adjourned the month before," is doubtless predicated upon the fact that, after the old clerk had, in the seventh month (the month before the separation took place), made the minute referring the consideration of the report of the committee on clerk to the next meeting, under the care of the committee, the meeting went on in the transaction of its other business, in which the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings' Committees took part, urging the appointment of certain members recommended by them as overseers, and that without the slightest objection being made to the Friend at the table acting as clerk: the same clerk signed the reports to the Quarterly Meeting, and the Quarterly Meeting received and accepted these reports as from the regularly organized Monthly Meeting. This certainly must convey to every unprejudiced mind the belief, that both parties then acquiesced in the old clerk having retained his station. But "to show how Friends of New England Yearly Meeting view this matter," the "Vindication" gives "the following extract from a report made to the Yearly Meeting in 1845, by a committee of the representatives from the several Quarterly Meetings except Rhode Island."

"We are also united in judgment, that at said Monthly Meeting, in the seventh month, Thomas Wilbur was bound by the discipline and good order of our Society to record the clearly expressed sense of the Monthly Meeting appointing David Shove as its clerk, in accordance with the advice of the Yearly Meeting's Committee; and by refusing to do so, so far departed from the discipline and usages of our Society, as well as from the subordination of inferior to superior meetings, and individuals to the body, as to disqualify him from any longer holding the office of clerk of Swanzey Monthly Meeting; and *said office thereupon became vacant*. And it is further our sense and judgment that, at Swanzey Monthly Meeting, in the eighth month, David Shove was rightfully the clerk, having been thereto duly ap-

pointed, and was, remained, and is the only properly constituted clerk of Swanzey Monthly Meeting." *Vind.*, p. 54.

We know not what portion of the *discipline* provides for the kind of minute which a clerk must make, even where the sense of a meeting is *clearly expressed*; but certainly there is none obliging a clerk to record, as the clearly expressed sense of the meeting, what one-half of its active members are opposed to, though a Yearly Meeting's Committee may advise it. But leaving that point, it appears to us, that the assumption of the Committee of Representatives, that because the advice of the Yearly Meeting's Committee who should be appointed as clerk of the Monthly Meeting, was not complied with at once, but the old clerk made a minute referring the subject to the next meeting, therefore the office of clerk became immediately vacant, is irreconcilable with the facts already stated, and fully admitted by all, viz.: the business of the meeting continuing to be regularly transacted, the Committees of the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings taking an active part therein, as the business of a fully organized Monthly Meeting; and the reports of the meeting signed by the old clerk, being received by the subsequent Quarterly Meeting, without any hint being given that it was thought he had vacated his station.

In the communication presented by the Yearly Meeting's Committee to the Monthly Meeting at that time, besides advising who the meeting should appoint as clerk, they also advised the appointment of certain individuals as overseers, naming one in particular themselves; and after the minute respecting the appointment of clerk had been made, and the meeting passed from that subject, the consideration of the appointment of those individuals to that important station was entered on, and the Yearly Meeting's Committee strongly urged the meeting to act in the case and make the appointment. Could that Committee and the Quarterly Meeting's Committee have so acted, had they then been of the opinion subsequently advanced by the Committee of Representatives, that the Monthly Meeting was without a clerk, and disorganized?

While contending for the absolute power of a Yearly Meeting's Committee, its right to direct who the officers of an inferior meeting shall be, and asserting that a clerk of a Monthly

Meeting at once vacates his station, by declining, though in accordance with the judgment of a large portion of the meeting, clearly expressed, to record the appointment of an individual to that station whom they may recommend, it is highly necessary that such a committee should at least be required to act consistently; and not, when circumstances appear to render it expedient, repudiate a proceeding, in which, at the time of its transpiring, they took an active part, and, by their acquiescence, sanctioned.

The Yearly and Quarterly Meeting's Committees and the Quarterly Meeting itself, fully corroborate the statement made in the Philadelphia "Report," that both parties did then acknowledge the old clerk to have been in that station when the meeting adjourned, in the seventh month, the meeting before the separation took place; and to us it appears necessarily to follow from that, and the character of the events in the eighth month, "that the meeting which, with the old clerk at the table, proceeded in the transaction of its business after the others had adjourned, in no way lost its standing as Swansey Monthly Meeting."

It has been repeatedly alleged by some who were unwilling to admit, to their full extent, the errors committed by the Yearly Meeting of New England prior to the separation, but who, nevertheless, could not deny the fairness of the deductions drawn in the Philadelphia "Report" from the facts as they are given by both the bodies there, that the circumstances of the case were not fully understood; and that, if we could obtain the explanations of those composing the larger body, we should find it was not their intention to depart from the acknowledged rules and order of church government in the Society, nor to advocate or enforce principles adverse to those heretofore recognized and regarded in its disciplinary proceedings, however much the transactions narrated by them may appear to warrant such a conclusion. We have no wish to impugn motives, but, after a careful and candid examination of the explanations and arguments given in the "Vindication," we cannot reject the conviction, that it contains nothing that alters the aspect of any of the acts designated in the Philadelphia "Report," as evincing a disregard of important principles and private rights; while the departure

from those principles, and the infringement of those rights, is either extenuated or defended.

We think there can no longer be a reasonable doubt as to the principles of church government embraced or, at least, acted on by that body. They are, as we have seen, distinctly set forth in the "Vindication," and include, among others,—a denial to their members of the right to worship according to the dictates of their conscience;—an avowed disregard, in their administration of the discipline, of those principles of civil liberty and constitutional right common to us all; a denial to Monthly Meetings of the right to judge of the soundness or unsoundness of any published works;—the equal authority and obligation of the judgment of a committee with the decision of the meeting appointing it;—and the absolute authority of a Yearly Meeting's Committee to give advice in all cases whether of individuals or subordinate meetings, which advice carries with it the authority of the Yearly Meeting, is in fact discipline, and must be received and recorded by the subordinate meetings without regard to their own judgment in the case.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has clearly set forth these principles in its "Report," and pointed out the sad consequences resulting from their operation, as manifested in the course of events which led to and accompanied the separation in New England, and has so acted towards the two bodies there as not to sanction them, but to continue steadfast in the support of the ancient order and discipline of the Church. Her views are expressed in the following language:—

"The obstruction which exists in our Yearly Meeting, to holding a correspondence with that body in New England, which has authorized or sustained the proceedings upon which we have animadverted, does not arise from any feeling of hostility to them, nor from partiality to any man; but from a conscientious belief, that, whatever may have been the motive, their acts have gone to condemn many who have been standing for the ancient faith of Friends, and against the introduction of error; that in so doing, wrong opinions have received support, and the discipline and rights of members have been violated; and that it was the course pursued by them in these transactions

which led to the separation. Until, therefore, these proceedings shall be rectified or annulled, we see not how unity is to be restored." See "Report," page 38.

The Yearly Meeting of Ohio has also been restrained from sanctioning these principles and the evils growing out of them, and although she has not published anything on the subject, we doubt not it is from the same cause that has actuated her elder sister.

The views taken by these two meetings, the conscientious scruples, the religious obligation felt by them, are as widely known as the cause that has given rise to them, and yet the Conference of the four Yearly Meetings, in its "Address to Friends," recently published, in allusion to the stand taken by these two Yearly Meetings, says: "We believe, nay, we are entirely persuaded, there is nothing now existing in our Society to justify their present position—nothing that should interrupt the ancient practices and friendly relations that formerly existed between all the Yearly Meetings of Friends;" and it entreats them "to put away from *them* all that separates, and again come into that unity which formerly existed and is now so seriously interrupted." Here, then, we have a full indorsement by the Conference, of the principles avowed and the course pursued by the larger body in New England, inasmuch as it declares there is nothing in them which justifies the position occupied by Philadelphia and Ohio Yearly Meetings; and the refusal of those meetings to sanction those principles and acts, is denounced as the sole cause of disunity. The maintenance, then, of the ancient principles of Church government, and the long-established order of our religious Society, or an acquiescence in the principles and practices of the larger body in New England, is the question at issue, and it comes home, or should come home, to the feelings of every member, rendering its right settlement a matter of deep interest to every one who has the welfare of our beloved Society at heart. What the result may be, time will make manifest. Our trust is in the power and overruling providence of Him who raised the Society up for his own praise, and who we believe will not permit it to be utterly laid waste. We sincerely desire the restoration of unity and harmony among its members and its different Meetings, but it

must be in the only right way ; a faithful, uniform support of sound principles: any compromise of these principles only tends to weakness and blindness, inducing disorganization and confusion.

As we have already remarked, the introduction of unsound doctrines into the Society has been the primary cause of the difficulty and divisions now so rife within its borders. From it sprung the course of proceedings that resulted in the separation in New England. The larger body there, however, declare that it has in no degree relaxed in its attachment to the ancient acknowledged faith of the Society of Friends. The attachment of the smaller body to that faith has never been impeached, even by those who have refused to acknowledge them as members. We would then bring home to those who have approved and adopted the "Vindication," the query put by them in its 15th page, in relation to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, with an earnest desire that they may duly appreciate its full import in regard to themselves, and those who are separated from them. "Can it be that brethren of the same faith, members of one household, acknowledging the same standard of doctrine, and led thereby into the support of the same testimonies, can be separated by any feeling of distrust or difference in administration?"

In conclusion, we can cordially adopt the language of the Philadelphia "Report :" "Inasmuch as divisions and subdivisions must always be attended by consequences more or less destructive of the peace and welfare of meetings and families, and of the strength and influence of the Society in supporting its testimonies ; it is our sincere and fervent desire that all parties, under a deep sense of the greatness of the cause, and the excellency of the Church government which our Society has been intrusted with and called to support, may, in the sight of the Lord, examine the respective grounds they have taken ; and that where any infraction of private rights or of the discipline has been committed, they may be willing, under the constraining power of truth, to acknowledge and do it away. We all profess to act under the government of the same blessed Head of the Church, who laid down his life for our sakes, and taught us that we should lay down our lives for one another ; and we

believe that if all classes stand open to the softening influences of the love of God, through his mercy and goodness, everything that has divided and alienated from each other may be entirely removed, and a re-establishment on the right foundation witnessed, in that faith, and love, and unity, which in former years bound together the members of the different Yearly Meetings of our Society."

A DECLARATION,

BY THE LATE

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY,

OF

HIS FAITH

RESPECTING SEVERAL POINTS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

ALSO,

A TESTIMONY

OF NORWICH MONTHLY MEETING, CONCERNING

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY, DECEASED;

PRESENTED TO AND READ IN

THE YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,

HELD IN LONDON, 1847,

AND PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ITS MEETING FOR
SUFFERINGS.

PHILADELPHIA:

HENRY LONGSTRETH, 347 MARKET STREET.

1847.

KC

INTRODUCTION.

THE statement by the late **JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY**, of Earlham, near Norwich, England, of his Christian faith, which will be found in the following pages, was made by him under the following circumstances.

A controversy in the law arose between two bodies, each claiming the character of the same monthly meeting of the Society of Friends, respecting the possession of a Friends' meeting-house.

In the course of this controversy, equity proceedings were had; and in the answer of one of the parties to a bill in Chancery, filed by the other party, certain allegations were made respecting the religious opinions of Joseph John Gurney.

After the filing and printing of this answer, thus bringing into the controversy the belief of this eminent man, although religious doctrines had had no connection with the case, he was asked if it would be consistent with his views of propriety and religious duty, to give his testimony, in such form as could be used in legal proceedings, of his belief in the particulars respecting which the allegations had been made.

The declaration which follows was furnished by him, in answer to this application. The subjects of the "Sabbath" and the "Resurrection" were not mentioned in the proceedings in Chancery, and the explanation of his belief respecting them was added, for reasons assigned by himself.

The legal form of the declaration is retained, because it seems desirable to give it publicity, in the form in which it was furnished by him.

It is now published, that all interested may have the opportunity of seeing the statement of Joseph John Gurney's religious views on important Christian doctrines, from his own pen, after the allegations which have been made by others respecting many of them had assumed a tangible form; and in the hope that it may have a healing effect upon existing differences of opinion in the Society of Friends, and tend to promote Christian harmony and fellowship.

EARLHAM, NEAR NORWICH,

Seventh month 26th, 1846.

HAVING been requested by my friend Stephen A. Chase, of Salem, Massachusetts, to furnish him with a statement of my Christian faith, respecting the Holy Scriptures, the immediate and perceptible operation of the Spirit, the doctrine of Justification, and that of the Trinity, (as it is called,) I have much satisfaction in complying with his request.

I. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. My belief respecting the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament may be stated in the words of **GEORGE FOX**; “Concerning the Holy Scriptures, we believe they were given forth by the Holy Spirit of God through the holy men of God, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: we believe they are to be read, believed, and fulfilled, (he that fulfils them is Christ;) and they are profitable for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works; and are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus: we believe the Holy Scriptures are the words of God.”

See Declaration of Faith issued by George Fox and others, and presented to the Governor and Council of Barbadoes.—Evans' Exposition, p. 238.

Also in the words of **ROBERT BARCLAY**; “Moreover because they are commonly acknowledged by all to have been written by the dictates of the Holy Spirit, and that the errors which may be supposed by the injury of times to have slipped in,* are not such but that there is a sufficient clear testimony

* The errors here alluded to, are those of copying only, which have given rise, as is generally known, to a great number of various readings. These for the most part, are entirely destitute of importance. After a very extensive and accurate collation of manuscripts and other authorities, the

left to all the essentials of the Christian faith, we do look upon them as the only fit outward judge of controversies among Christians, and that whatsoever doctrine is contrary unto their testimony may therefore be rejected as false. And for our parts, we are very willing that all our doctrines and practices be tried by them, which we never refused, and never shall in all controversies with our adversaries, *as the judge and test.* We shall also be very willing to admit it as a positive certain maxim, that whatsoever any do, pretending to the Spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil."—*Apology, Prop. III.*

Also in the words of WILLIAM PENN, "We both love, honour, and prefer them before all books in the world; ever choosing to express our belief of the Christian faith and doctrine in the terms thereof, and rejecting all principles and doctrines whatsoever, that are repugnant thereto."—*Testimony to the Truth, Evans, p. 248.*

Also in the words of the General Epistle of the YEARLY MEETING OF LONDON, for the year 1836. "It has ever been, and still is, the belief of the Society of Friends, that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, were given by inspiration of God: that therefore the declarations contained in them rest on the authority of God himself; and there can be no appeal, from them, to any other authority whatsoever; that they are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, being the appointed means of making known to us the blessed truths of Christianity; that they are the only divinely authorized record of the doctrines which we are bound, as Christians, to believe, and of the moral principles which are to regulate our actions; that no

text both of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures may now be regarded as being, for all practical purposes, settled and ascertained; and the blessed result is, that the readers of Holy Writ are not deprived of a single moral principle, or a single doctrinal truth.

doctrine which is not contained in them can be required of any one to be believed, as an article of faith; that whatsoever any man says or does, which is contrary to the Scriptures, though under profession of the immediate guidance of the Spirit, must be reckoned and accounted a mere delusion."*

While I fully agree with the plain testimony which has thus been always borne by Friends to the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and do sincerely acknowledge that the doctrines and precepts contained in them, are the doctrines and precepts of the Almighty himself, I also unite with Friends in objecting to the common practice of denominating the sacred volume "*the Word of God*," because I am of opinion that this epithet, considered as a distinguishing and exclusive title, properly belongs only to Christ of whom the Scriptures testify.

Secondly, I wish it to be clearly understood, that since the paramount authority of the Holy Scriptures over that of all other books, is a simple consequence of the fact, that they were given by inspiration of God, I must ever regard these sacred writings, pure and precious though they be, as entirely subordinate, in point of dignity and power, to the Holy Spirit from whom they came, and who is himself their true and ever living Author. And further, though they are "the appointed means of making known to us the blessed truths of Christianity," and thus "are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," I entertain a deep and thorough conviction, that they can never impart an efficacious and saving knowledge of divine things, unless their contents are unfolded to the understanding, and impressed on the heart, by the immediate influences of that Spirit from whom they emanated. While, therefore, it is our unquestion-

* This Epistle was, as I understand, republished by most of the yearly meetings of North America.

able duty, as the Society of Friends has frequently declared, to read them diligently ourselves, and as diligently to teach them to our children, we ought, in the performance of this duty, reverently to depend on divine aid and illumination, remembering the words of our blessed Lord—especially applicable as they are to the present subject—“without me ye can do **NOTHING**.”

II. THE IMMEDIATE AND PERCEPTIBLE OPERATION OF THE SPIRIT.

In reference to this great subject, I have, in the first place, plainly to declare my belief, in unison with that of Friends from their first rise to the present day, that the influence of the Holy Spirit, is very far from being confined to those who have a knowledge of Holy writ, and of the incarnate, crucified, and risen Saviour of whom it testifies. On the contrary, it is my firm conviction that as Christ died for all men, so all men, through his mediation and sacrifice on the cross, are placed in a capacity of salvation, and receive a measure of divine light, which, although in numberless instances shining “in darkness,” and overborne by ignorance and superstition, is in its own nature pure and holy, and perceptible to the rational mind of man—so that those who believe in it, and obey it, are thereby led to fear God, and to keep his law as it is written on their hearts; that such as these are accepted for Christ’s sake, even though they may never have heard his name; and thus sharing in the benefit of his atoning death on the cross, through ^{faith} in the degree of light bestowed upon them, they are to be regarded as partakers *in their measure, and according to their capacity*, of the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In stating this point, I do not forget that the heathen world, both in ancient and modern times, has been found, generally

speaking, in a state of great blindness and degradation, as compared with that part of mankind which has the outward knowledge of Christ, and that their moral responsibility is small in proportion; and I freely confess my belief (also in unison with Friends from their first origin until now) that the immediate and perceptible guidance and government of the Holy Spirit, are *pre-eminently* enjoyed by true believers in Christ—the living members of the Christian church. To these was addressed the language—“Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things;” and again, “The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him:” 1 John ii. 20-27. Although directly miraculous gifts, and that extraordinary measure of inspiration which the apostles received, were peculiarly adapted to the first settlement of Christianity in the world, and (without daring to limit the operations of divine power) we do not look for them in the present day, yet I am well assured that the promise of the Holy Ghost as a perceptible guide to truth and righteousness, and as the only qualifier for the exercise of those gifts which are instrumental for the edification and enlargement of the church, were not confined to primitive days, but are the inheritance of the people of God, under the gospel dispensation, to the end of time. That promise was not only to the first believers, but to their children, and to all that were afar off, even to as many as the Lord their God should call: Acts ii. 39. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, was to abide with the church “for ever:” John xiv. 16. “As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord (to Israel’s Messiah;) “**MY SPIRIT THAT IS UPON THEE**, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s

seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever:" Isaiah lix. 21.

If I am asked in what respects, according to my belief, the immediate and perceptible operation of the Holy Spirit is experienced by true Christians, I answer,

First, in that divine teaching and illumination by which the truths of our holy religion are made clear to the mind, and by which the mind is brought into such a condition, as to be able fully to receive and appropriate them; more especially in deepening those convictions of sin, and strengthening that living faith, of which the Spirit Himself is the very Source and Author.

Secondly, in the application of the general moral principles declared in Scripture, to every particular exigency or question which may arise in the course of our lives—there being a swift witness for God within us, instructing our conscience, and plainly showing us, on every successive occasion which requires it, in what way that love to God and man which is the fulfilling of the law, is to be brought into practice—what we ought to do as responsible moral agents, and what to leave undone. And here I would remark, that according to my apprehension of the subject, it is *on this ground*, in connection with a simple obedience to the precepts of our Lord and his apostles, that Friends have so long been led to bear an open practical testimony against war in all its forms, against oaths under whatsoever circumstance or pretext, against the sin of trading in our fellow men, and of holding them in slavery, against the vain amusements and heartless dissipation of the world, against extravagance and useless ornament in dress or furniture, and against all that is opposed to Christian simplicity and truth, in the modes of behaviour and address current amongst men.

Thirdly, in the call to his own particular line of duty, of every living member of the church, for the welfare of the

body, and for the advancement of the cause of truth and righteousness; seeing that “the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man *to profit withal:*” 1 Cor. xii. 7;—an office of the Comforter wholly independent of the sacred records; for while Scripture abounds in descriptions of spiritual gifts, and of their true origin and operation, the call of the individual member of the church to the exercise of any particular gift, is a matter which belongs to the hidden counsels and sole prerogative of the Saviour himself; and is made known to the Christian only by the immediate and perceptible light and guidance of the Holy Spirit. These remarks apply with especial force to the gift or office of the Christian ministry. I am one with the Society of Friends in openly declaring my conviction, that it is the great Head of the church alone who selects and ordains his own ministers, calls them into his service, qualifies them by his Spirit for the performance of it, and graciously directs them as to the time, place, and matter of their communications—the immediate putting forth and anointing of the Holy Ghost being indispensable, not only for the first entrance on the work, but for the continued exercise of it, on every successive occasion. I also believe—as Friends have always declared—that in accordance with the prophecy of Joel, (ii. 28,) and with the experience of the earliest Christian believers, the gift of “prophecy”—that is, of ministry uttered under the immediate influence of the Spirit—is graciously imparted to persons of both sexes; and that as it is freely received, *so it must be communicated to others without money and without price.* Incapable in its own nature of being appointed, provided, or hired by men, and coming from the Lord alone, it ought to be exercised in simple conformity to his will, under the immediate teaching and government of his Spirit, without any secular end in view, and for the sole purpose of the glory of God our Saviour.

Here I think it right to remark, that I fully unite with

Friends in approving and maintaining their excellent practice of sitting down in silence for the public worship of Almighty God; for while this mode of worship alone consists with our principles respecting the ministry as now stated, it is peculiarly adapted to that prostration of soul before the Lord, that patient waiting upon him, and that listening to the immediate teaching of his Spirit, which are essential to a real growth in grace, and to the solid formation of the Christian character. Nor ought such a practice to be confined to public occasions, for “it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth; he *sitteth alone and keepeth silence* because he hath borne it upon him; he putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope:” Lam. iii. 27-29. Comp. *Robert Barclay on Immediate Revelation, universal and saving light, worship and ministry, Apology, Prop. ii. vi. x. xi.*

III. JUSTIFICATION.

By this term I understand the forgiveness and acceptance, with God, of the penitent sinner, for the sake and through the mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood. This is a doctrine absolutely fundamental and essential in Christianity, and has always been steadily maintained by the Society of Friends. It ought, however, to be inseparably associated in our minds, with the equally important truth, that “without holiness no man can see the Lord,” and that we cannot avail ourselves of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, unless, being born again of the Spirit, we heartily repent of our sins, resolutely forsake and renounce them, and humbly endeavour, through divine aid, to walk in the light. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:” Rom. viii. 1. “If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship

one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin :" 1 John ii. 7.

I can most freely subscribe to the following declarations made by the Society of Friends as a body, and by some of its most eminent members, on this cardinal and vital topic.

"Christ gave himself, his body, for the life of the whole world, and paid the debt and made satisfaction, and doth enlighten every man that comes into the word, that all through him might believe; and *he that doth not believe in the offering is condemned already.*"—George Fox—*Great Mystery*, p. 63. *Evans*, p. 29.

"Christ Jesus the Emmanuel, God with us; whom all the angels must worship. Christ offered himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God, and by his blood purges our consciences from dead works to serve the living God. And so we know that Christ, by one offering, for ever perfected them that are sanctified. And so as people walk in the light, they have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Christ cleanseth them from all sin. And Christ his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we being delivered from sin should live unto righteousness—by whose stripes you are healed. And we *being justified by the blood of Christ*, shall be saved from wrath through him; for if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."—*Epistle issued by the Society in 1688: Evans*, pp. 29, 30.

"This Jesus who was the Foundation of the holy prophets and apostles, is our Foundation; and we believe there is no other foundation to be laid, but that which is laid, even Christ Jesus, who tasted death for every man, shed his blood for all men, is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world, according as John the Baptist testified of him, when he said, 'Behold the Lamb

of God that taketh away the sin of the world.'”—*Letter from George Fox to the Council and Government of Barbadoes: Evans, p. 32.*

“We do not hereby intend” (that is by enforcing the necessity of obedience to the Holy Spirit) “any ways to lessen or derogate from the atonement and sacrifice of Jesus Christ; but, on the contrary, do magnify and exalt it. For as we believe all those things to have been certainly transacted which are recorded in the Holy Scriptures concerning the birth, life, miracles, sufferings, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; so we also believe that it is the duty of every one to believe it, to whom it pleases God to reveal the same; yea, we believe *it were damnable unbelief not to believe it when so declared*, but to resist that holy seed, which as minded, would lead and incline every one to believe it, as it is offered unto them.” *Robert Barclay's Apology, Evans, p. 43.*

Again, “As we believe it was necessary that Christ should come, that by his death and sufferings he might offer up himself a sacrifice to God for our sins, who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree, so *we believe that the remission of sins, which any partake of, is only in and by virtue of that most satisfactory sacrifice, and no otherwise.*”—*Idem.*

“In him (Christ) we have life, *and by faith atonement in his blood.*”—*William Penn's Works: Evans, p. 49.*

“We are led by the light and spirit of Christ, with holy reverence to confess unto the blood of Christ shed at Jerusalem, as that by which a propitiation was held forth to *the remission of the sins that were past*, through the forbearance of God, *unto all that believe.*”—*William Penn's Works, p. 411: Evans, p. 54.*

“We do own *first* that the Word of God, the only begotten of the Father, did take up a body of the flesh of the Virgin Mary, who was of the seed of David, according to the

Scriptures, and did the will of the Father therein, in holy obedience unto him both in life and death.

“Secondly, That he did offer up the flesh and blood of that body; though not only so, for he poured out his *soul*, he poured out his life, a sacrifice or offering for sin, (do not, oh do not stumble at it, but rather wait on the Lord to understand it; for we speak in this matter what we know,) a sacrifice unto the Father, and in it tasted death for every man, and that it is in consideration and through God’s acceptance of this sacrifice for sin, that the *sins of believers are pardoned*, that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, or who is of the faith of Jesus.”—*Isaac Pennington; Works: Evans*, p. 87.

“Question. Are you justified by that blood of Christ that was shed at Jerusalem?”

“Answer. *By the blood of Jesus Christ*, the Son of the living God, who was the express image of the Father’s glory, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead really, who suffered at Mount Calvary, by Jerusalem, for sinners, *am I justified*.”—*Humphrey Smith: Evans*, p. 94.

RICHARD CLARIDGE, like some other writers of our Society, has treated on *Justification* as consisting of two parts; first, the forgiveness of the penitent sinner through faith in Christ crucified, and secondly, purification from sin by the power of the Holy Ghost. For my own part I am accustomed to describe the latter by the term “*Sanctification*.” Nevertheless, I am one with him in his Christian *doctrine*. “By the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, without us,” says he, “we, *truly repenting and believing*, are, through the mercy of God, *justified from the imputation of sins and transgressions that are past, as though they had never been committed*: and by the mighty work of Christ within us, the power, habits, and nature of sin are destroyed; that as sin once reigned unto death, even so now grace reigneth unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ

our Lord; and all this is effected, not by a bare or naked act of faith, separate from obedience, but in the obedience of faith; Christ being the author of eternal salvation to none but those who obey him.”—*On Justification*, p. 79.

“We do, indeed, renounce the profession of justification by the imputation of Christ, or his righteousness performed without men, by men while they are in the degenerated estate, and unconverted and unreconciled, and unborn again; for by such profession of justification many deceive their souls. But yet we say that righteousness *is imputed to us, and reckoned unto us, who believe in Christ, and have received him*; even the obedience and sufferings that he performed without us are ours who have received him within us, and therefore we are not reprobates; yet we do acknowledge that he wrought perfect righteousness by obedience and sufferings, and *that righteousness is ours by faith*.”—*Edward Burrough, “Satan’s Design Defeated;” Evans*, p. 99.

A safer or more satisfactory declaration than this of the true doctrine of justification by faith, as it is held by every sound Christian, cannot surely be required by the most ardent advocate of evangelical truth. Those who accuse the early members of our religious Society of unsoundness in Christian doctrine, are little aware how remarkably they were distinguished by a firm unbending faith in Christ as the Saviour of the world, and by that ardent love for him, which constrained them to devote themselves to his service, and to follow him faithfully, through many and deep sufferings, even unto death. Conscientiously, do I affirm, that although I may have used terms somewhat different from those which some of them employed, and have occasionally taken a different view of particular passages of Scripture, we have advocated one and the same precious truth—even the “Truth as it is in Jesus.” Most willing were *they* at all times to confess—as the Society has frequently done in its corporate capacity—that Jesus

Christ in all his gracious offices is the only Foundation which can be laid in Zion ; that all our hopes of salvation are in Him ; that it is through his perfect obedience, and propitiatory offering on the cross, that we poor sinners receive the forgiveness of our sins, and are placed in possession of a well-founded hope, full of immortality—and that a living faith in Him is the appointed means by which we are made partakers of these free mercies of God our Father. By this faith did our forefathers in the truth spiritually *eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood* ; and being richly favoured with this inward experience, they neither required nor admitted any outward ceremony in divine worship, to remind them of the death of their Lord.

Equally willing have I always been, and still am, to acknowledge that (as they frequently declared, and as the Society itself has never failed to testify) we cannot truly come unto Christ, except the Father who hath sent him draw us—that the influence by which the Father draws us to the Son is that of the Holy Spirit, who convinces of sin, bestows true repentance, and lays the sinner prostrate at the feet of the Saviour ; and finally, that except we be thoroughly cleansed from our iniquities by the baptism which saves—even the ONE baptism of Christianity, which is with the Holy Ghost—and thus become new creatures in Christ Jesus, we can never obtain that glorious inheritance which the Saviour has purchased for us with his own blood.

The following extract from a declaration of faith, issued by the **YEARLY MEETING OF PHILADELPHIA**, in 1828, (the time of the Hicksite separation) is so clearly to the point and so excellent, that I think it right to subjoin it to the quotations already given. “We believe that nothing man can do, or suffer, will atone for, or cancel his sins. They are remitted by the mercy of God, through Christ Jesus our Lord, for the sake of the sufferings and death of Christ, and it is the power

and efficacy of that propitiatory offering, *upon faith and repentance*, that justifies both Jews and Gentiles from the sins that are past; and it is the power of Christ's spirit in our hearts, that purifies and makes us acceptable before God; 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare I say at this time his righteousness; that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus,' Rom. iii. 24-26. 'But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement:' Rom. v. 8-11.

"Not only do the Separatists deny the universal efficacy of the offering of our Lord, and term the imputation of his righteousness as the ground of our acceptance, a pernicious and absurd idea, but they appear to rejoice in the hope, that the doctrine will be discarded, as the fruit of the apostasy from the Christian faith. Believing as we do, that it is only as we come to be divested of our own righteousness, and of all confidence in it, and through divine mercy clothed upon with the righteousness of Christ, that any can have a firm ground whereon to rest their hope of salvation, we sincerely deplore the delusion of those, who thus wantonly deprive themselves of that hope, which maketh not ashamed, and entereth within the veil."

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

I have never thought it right, either in preaching or writing, to make use of this term, which is scholastic in its origin, and is liable to misconstruction; but I consider the doctrine itself, though far beyond the reach of the natural understanding of man, to be plainly set forth in Scripture; and so far am I from regarding it as merely theoretical in its nature, that I accept it as of the highest practical importance in the experience of every true believer.

No one who has an experimental knowledge of the great plan of redemption, and calmly reflects on its several features, can fail to perceive that the proper divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is one of those amazing truths which impart a living efficacy to the whole; for while he offered up himself on the cross as man, yet was he omnipotent, *because of his deity*, to bear the weight of the sins of all mankind, and just in proportion to the supreme dignity of the sufferer, is the comprehensiveness of the hope and joy which we derive from his sufferings. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Rom. viii. 32. Again, where is the individual convinced of the truth, *as Friends have ever held it*, who will not allow that it is in virtue of his glorious Godhead, that Christ governs his universal church by the immediate influences of his Spirit; and that he is by the same Spirit, “the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world?”

It would be irrelevant for me here to adduce the clear and frequently repeated testimony of Scripture to the deity of Christ. Suffice it to say, that this testimony was accepted and promulgated without reserve by our earliest predecessors in the truth, and has always been maintained inviolate by the Society of Friends, to the present day. Nor has the faith of

our religious body been less scriptural, or less explicitly declared, respecting the divinity of the Holy Spirit; for where is the sound believer, who does not acknowledge that the Comforter, even the Holy Ghost, whom the Father sends to us in the name of the Son, to dwell with us and in us, and to guide us into all truth, (John xiv. 17, and xvi. 13;) against whom it is an unpardonable sin to blaspheme; (Mark iii. 29;) into whose name the true convert is baptised, as well as into the name of the Father, and of the Son; (Matt. xxviii. 19;) who divideth to every man severally in the Church, "*as he will*," (1 Cor. xii. 11,) is himself truly and properly God? Yet, although the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are all three presented to us in Scripture as actually divine, and as severally distinguished by relative properties, in the economy of grace—it is still the same mind, the same power, the same essence. The whole Scripture assures us, that there is but one God—even the immutable and everlasting Jehovah—and, therefore, these Three are One. And here I wish it to be distinctly understood, that when in any of my writings I have adverted to the "personality," or "personal attributes" of the Holy Spirit, I have had no intention whatsoever to convey the idea that the Comforter possesses a personal form; much less to represent him as an object of worship separate from God; but only to show, that so far from being a mere influence, he must be regarded as a divine intelligent Agent, truly ONE with the Father and the Son.

My belief on the subject cannot be better expressed than in the following declarations of the early members of our religious Society:—

"We believe concerning the Father, Son, and Spirit, according to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, which we receive and embrace as the most authentic and perfect declaration of Christian faith, being indited by the Holy Spirit of God, that never errs; 1st, That there is one God and Father,

of whom are all things; 2d, That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom all things were made, who was glorified with the Father before the world began, who is God over all, blessed for ever. 3d, That there is one Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father and the Son, the leader, sanctifier, and comforter of his people. And we further believe, as the Holy Scriptures soundly and sufficiently express, that these three are ONE—even the Father, the Word, and the Spirit.”—*George Fox's Answer to all such as falsely say the Quakers are no Christians, pp. 26, 27: Evans, p. 3.*

“So being led by the Spirit of God, ye are his sons and daughters, and, by his Spirit, will come to know the Three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. These are the THREE WITNESSES that are in heaven, that bear record of all things; for He is God in the heaven, and God in the earth.”—*George Fox's Epistles: Evans, p. 3.*

“There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One. The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. The Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now the saints have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that they might know the things which are freely given to them of God. For the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom *the Father* sends in *Christ's* name, He teacheth them all things, and bringeth all things to their remembrance.”—*Robert Barclay's Confession of Faith, p. 104: Evans, p. 5.*

“Perversion 9. The Quakers deny the Trinity. Principle—Nothing less. They believe in the Holy Three, or Trinity of Father, Word, and Spirit, according to Scripture, and that

these Three are truly and properly one—of one nature as well as will.”—*William Penn’s Key, &c.: Evans, p. 7.*

“ The Holy Scripture Trinity, or Three thereby meant, we never questioned, but believed ; as also the unity of essence ; that they are one substance, one divine, infinite Being ; and also we question not but sincerely believe the *relative properties* of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to Holy Scripture testimony, and that these Three are one.”—*George Whitehead, p. 195 : Evans, p. 8.*

“ Now consider seriously, if a man from his heart believe thus concerning the eternal power and Godhead, that the Father is God, the Word God, the Holy Spirit God ; and that these are one Eternal God, waiting so to know God, and to be subject to him accordingly ; is not this man in a right frame of heart towards the Lord in this respect ? Indeed, friends, we do know God sensibly and experimentally, to be a Father, Word, and Spirit, and we worship the Father in the Son, by his own Spirit, and here meet with the seal of acceptance in Him.”—*Isaac Pennington’s Antichrist Unmasked, p. 27 : Evans, p. 10.*

To these explicit testimonies, given forth on behalf of the body, by eminent individuals, may be added the following declaration solemnly made by the Society, A. D. 1693 :—

“ We sincerely profess faith in God by his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, as being our light and life, our only way to the Father, and also our only Mediator and Advocate with the Father.

“ That God created all things ; he made the world by his Son Jesus Christ, he being that powerful and living Word by whom all things were made ; and that the Father, the Word, and Holy Spirit are one : in Divine Being inseparable ; one true, living, and eternal God, blessed forever.” *Signed on behalf of our Christian profession and people aforesaid—*

George Whitehead, Ambrose Rigge, &c. &c. . . . Sewel's History, vol. ii. p. 499.

Under the full conviction that this is a subject above all others, on which it were very foolishness to attempt to be wise above that which is written, and under a solemn sense of the importance of our faithfully adhering to the doctrine of the *Oneness* of Jehovah, I will now conclude my declaration of faith, on this grand, essential article, in words which I have already published. They were suggested to me, many years ago, by a venerable minister of the gospel, who dearly loved our religious Society, and faithfully adhered to its acknowledged principles to his dying day.

“While the Christian rejoices in the distinct characters and offices of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, so graciously revealed to us for our instruction and edification, he probably never finds his soul bowed down with so deep a reverence, or filled with so pure a delight, as when he contemplates the Almighty as an ineffable glory—an incommunicable name—an infinite and incomprehensible **UNITY**.”

Although I have now given a full and explicit answer, as I trust, to the inquiry of my friend Stephen A. Chase, I am best satisfied to add a short explanation of my belief on two points which he has not mentioned—*the resurrection of the body, and the sabbath*.

My convictions on the former subject are well stated in the following sentences selected from the declaration of faith made by the Society of Friends in 1693, and already cited under a preceding head.

“Concerning the resurrection of the dead and the great day of judgment yet to come, beyond the grave, or after death, and Christ’s coming, without us, to judge the quick and the dead, what the Holy Scriptures plainly declare and

testify in these matters, we have been always ready to embrace. *For the doctrine of the resurrection*; if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable: 1 Cor. xv. 19. We sincerely believe not only a resurrection in Christ from the fallen sinful state here, but a rising and ascending into glory with him hereafter; that when he at last appears, we may appear with him in glory: Col. iii. 4; 1 John iii. 2.

“But that all the wicked who lived in rebellion against the light of grace, and die finally impenitent, shall come forth to the resurrection of condemnation.

“The soul or spirit of every man or woman shall be reserved in its own distinct and proper being, and shall have its proper body as God is pleased to give it: 1 Cor. xv. A natural body is sown, a spiritual body is raised; that being first which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual. And though it is said that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, the change shall be such as that ‘flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither shall corruption inherit incorruption’: 1 Cor. xv. We shall be raised out of all corruption and corruptibility, out of all mortality; and the children of God and of the resurrection shall be equal to the angels of God in heaven. And as the celestial bodies do far excel the terrestrial, so we expect our spiritual bodies in the resurrection shall far excel what our bodies now are.” To which declaration may be added the words of JOHN CROOK. “We believe that we shall be raised with the *same bodies*, so far as natural and spiritual, corruptible and incorruptible, terrestrial and celestial, can be the same.” *Evans*, p. 114.

Similar declarations were frequently made during the times when Friends were exposed to much controversy as well as persecution. On this subject, I have only to add that, while the testimony of Scripture to the resurrection of the

dead, and a future day of general judgment, is both unquestionable and abundant, and was fully received and admitted by our early Friends, it may also be clearly proved from Scripture, (as Friends have always maintained,) that the rational soul of man exists immediately after death either in happiness, or woe; and that it is only as we experience what it is to be raised from our death in trespasses and sins, and quickened into newness of life by the power of the Holy Ghost, that we can possibly be fitted for the awful change which awaits us all, from probation to retribution, and from a brief sojourn in this passing scene, to a fixed but boundless immortality.

With respect to the “sabbath,” I wish it to be distinctly understood, that in sometimes applying that term to the first day of the week, as it is observed among Christians, I have had a view to the simple meaning of the Hebrew word, viz. “*cessation from labour.*” I am perfectly aware that the maintenance of the Jewish sabbath, observed as it was and is on the seventh-day of the week, and with a ceremonial strictness which appertained only to the Mosaic law, is, under the gospel dispensation, no longer obligatory. And while I am of the judgment that the setting apart of *one* day, after every recurring period of *six* days of labour, for the blessed purposes of rest and worship, is not to be regarded as a matter of mere expediency, but as a moral and religious duty, truly belonging to the law of our God, I fully unite in the sentiment expressed by Robert Barclay and others of our early Friends, that no portion of time ought to be regarded by Christians as in itself holier than another—that all our time is the Lord’s—and that ceasing from our own wicked works, and all the willing and running of the carnal mind, we must press forward after that glorious rest, (typified by the sabbath of the Jews,) of which a precious foretaste is bestowed even

here, and which is perfected, for the people of God, in the world to come.

Joseph John Gurney of Earlham in the County of the City of Norwich, a minister of the gospel in the Society of Friends, on his solemn affirmation saith, that the declaration contained in the foregoing part of this sheet, and printed in eight columns,* is a true and honest declaration of his Christian faith on the several articles therein stated; and that to the best of his knowledge and belief, he has held the same sentiments for more than thirty years.

J. J. GURNEY,
of Earlham near Norwich, England.

Declared and affirmed before us at the Guildhall, in the City of Norwich, the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and forty-six.

JOHN BETTS, Mayor of the City of Norwich and County of the same.

GEO. D. LYNN, Justice of the Peace of the City of Norwich and County of the same.

J. H. BARNARD, Justice of the Peace of the City of Norwich and County of the same.

* The original was printed upon a large sheet, in eight columns, with the certificates above upon the same sheet.—S. A. C.

In a letter from J. J. Gurney to a Friend, he says :—

“ It is now thirty-three years since I became a decided Friend on conviction, and was soon afterwards led openly to confess my faith, and to adopt that plainness of speech and dress which become our Christian profession.

“ Ever since that period it has been my desire and endeavour, under a strong and abiding sense of religious duty, to maintain all our Christian testimonies with propriety and consistency, and steadily to uphold those religious principles which were professed and cherished by our earliest predecessors in the truth, and which continue to be maintained by our religious Society. Deeply, indeed, have I always felt the unutterable importance of those fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, which are held and acknowledged by other orthodox Christians as well as by ourselves ; but my sentiments and feelings on the subject of these blessed truths have never, in the smallest degree, weakened my attachment to those views respecting the government of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Church, and the immediate and perceptible guidance of the Holy Spirit, which more or less distinguish our own religious body.

“ Cordially do I unite in all those points, the holding of which is generally understood to be implied in that religious compact which binds us together as a distinct society : namely, the universality of the light of Christ in the conscience ; the cessation, under the gospel of all typical forms and ceremonies in the worship of God ; the spirituality and freedom of the Christian ministry, which ought never to be exercised amongst us, without a divine call to the work or without the immediate putting forth of the Holy Spirit on each successive occasion ; the unlawfulness of war and oaths ; and the

propriety of abstaining from the vain customs of the world in speech, demeanour and apparel, as well as in other respects. I cannot accuse myself of having ever under-rated or wilfully let down any of these points. I have steadily maintained them myself and have constantly endeavoured to promote them among my fellow members, and especially among our young people.

“With regard to my writings, the greater part of them were published many years ago, and, when published, met, as far as I knew, with general acceptance both among Friends and others. * * * * *

“I certainly am not aware, that there is any thing in them at variance from the truth as it is in Jesus, and as it has been always held by the Society of Friends. *If there be any thing which bears this appearance, I believe it will be found on examination, to consist, not in radical sentiment or doctrine, but simply in modes of statement or expression.*

“I have had great pleasure in correcting several passages in such of my works as were about to be re-published, on the suggestion of some of my friends; and I shall have the same satisfaction in correcting any other passages, (when opportunity of re-publication offers,) which may still require amendment, and which any friends will have the kindness to point out to me. There is one passage, however, in my writings, respecting which I now wish to offer thee a few words of explanation. It forms the conclusion of a tract on ‘Impartiality in the interpretation of Scripture,’ which was printed only for private circulation; circulated by me only within extremely narrow limits, being intended for the consideration and correction of my friends; *and published wholly without my knowledge or consent.* The passage is as follows: ‘Were I required to define Quakerism, I should not describe it as the system so elaborately wrought out by a Barclay, or as the doctrines and maxims of a Penn, or as the deep and refined

views of a Pennington; for all these authors have their defects as well as their excellencies. I should call it the religion of the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, without diminution, without addition, and without compromise.'

"Having reason to believe that these lines have been misunderstood, I now wish to say that nothing was further from my intention than to disparage the writings of Barclay, Pennington and Penn. Never has it been my practice to attack the Christian reputation of our early Friends. Deeply and truly do I honour their memory, and always have I been ready to maintain, that, although in the heat of controversy they may sometimes have expressed themselves in an unguarded manner, *they were sound and orthodox in their religious sentiments and especially in their view of the redemption of mankind through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.* The object of the passage was to show, that for a *perfect* exhibition of divine truth, we must look to the Holy Scriptures themselves; and that Quakerism, as held by these very men—worthy and excellent as they were—and handed down by them to their successors, is nothing more or less than the religion of the New Testament, without addition, without diminution, and without compromise.

J. J. GURNEY.

A TESTIMONY

OF NORWICH MONTHLY MEETING,

CONCERNING

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY, DECEASED.

WITH a deep feeling of sorrow for the loss which we have sustained, in the death of our beloved and much valued friend, accompanied, as we trust, with submission to the Divine will, we feel it right to issue the following testimony on his behalf.

Joseph John Gurney was the third son of John and Catherine Gurney, and was born at Earlham, near Norwich, on the 2nd of the eighth month, 1788. He was one of eleven children, who were deprived, whilst he was in his infancy, of the tender care and oversight of their pious and affectionate mother. They were objects of the tender solicitude of their numerous friends, as they advanced in life, under the guidance of a kind and indulgent father, and being brought up under circumstances which naturally introduced them to scenes of gaiety and amusement, it must be acknowledged that their young and sensitive minds, their ardent and amiable dispositions, were in no small danger of being led astray from the simplicity and purity of our Christian profession.

This period was also one of great religious and political excitement, to which our dear friend was much exposed; yet we believe, that at this time, he was the special object of Divine regard; and those who, in Christian love, often looked upon him with anxiety, were comforted in observing that, as he advanced in years, he appeared to be remarkably preserved from the temptations which surrounded him.

In childhood, he exhibited unusual sweetness of disposition, and great warmth of affection for all the members of his family circle; and this love increased and deepened, until it embraced the whole family of man. In very early life we find him expressing in his private journal an earnest desire, firstly, that he may be found loving and serving his God and Saviour with his whole heart; and secondly, that he may love his neighbour as himself, and be always on the watch to render service to his fellow-beings by every means in his power. Great care was taken with his education, and he exhibited, in his approach to manhood, considerable acquisitions in science and classical literature.

He was at an early period brought into a close attention to business, in his connexion with the extensive establishment belonging to his family: but whilst entering into the active scenes of life, with the most flattering prospects, his mind still appears to have been religiously disposed; and his private memorandums at this time sufficiently evince that he was brought to consider religion as the great business of his life,—his duty to God and his neighbour as the moving principle of action; and the views which he took of himself were of the most humbling and abasing nature.

Thus circumstanced, it became of great importance that he should be decided as to his religious course; and we find that, in his twenty-fourth year, he was brought into much serious thoughtfulness, and even conflict of mind, on the subject of uniting himself more closely to the Society of which he was a member by birth; and towards the close of the same year, resigning himself in the simplicity of a little child to the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit, he was enabled, though surrounded by adverse circumstances, to make a full surrender; and he maintained, with holy boldness, the principles and testimonies of the Society through the remainder of his life.

During this period, he mentions a particular case, in which he felt it to be his duty to take up his cross in the self-denying path which he had chosen, and on which he makes the following reflections:—"I now feel thankful and at ease, and I trust that the experience of the last week has been confirming, through mercy, to my general faith. I do humbly desire to be enabled to look to Christ as a precious Saviour who has shed his blood for me; and to love and obey him without reserve; conscious however that nothing can be done in my own strength. In thus entering more completely into a small society of Christians, I feel satisfied on the ground of believing that they do hold the doctrine of Christ, in many respects, in more original purity than any other sect. But, whilst thus impressed, I earnestly hope I shall ever be able to stand on a broad basis, whereon I can heartily unite with all Christians. I desire a catholic spirit, a truly humbled and dependent mind, an increase of faith, hope, and watchfulness, and knowledge of scriptural truth."

In the ninth month, 1817, he married Jane Birkbeck, the daughter of John and Martha Birkbeck, of Lynn, in this county, who was the mother of his two children: but this union, productive of much comfort during its continuance, was terminated by the unexpected death of his wife in 1822.

For many months before our beloved friend spoke in the ministry, he seems to have passed through deep conflict, and even sore temptation and depression: and earnest was his prayer that the hand of discipline might bring him into a state of greater holiness and nearness to God, that *He* would descend yet to purify, help, and guide him; and that he might ever feel his own unworthiness. His prayer was heard; for soon after he writes:—"How beautifully has the atmosphere cleared! and, after some of the deepest conflicts I have ever yet gone through, how delightful a calm am I introduced into! How do I desire to be bowed down in thankfulness to the

God of my life for his abundant blessings. How do I desire to receive from Him a renewed ability to love and serve Him with my whole heart." He then alludes to his mouth having been opened in the ministry since his last entry in his Journal, in the little meeting at Lynn; and adds, "I was made sensible of great peace and happiness afterwards." On a review, at a later period, of this his first appearance in the ministry in our religious meetings, he remarks as follows:—"Oh! the delightful flow of quiet happiness which continued to be my portion through the whole of that day! No words can adequately set it forth, and the savour of it is even *now* fresh in my remembrance." His communications proceeded, we believe, from the only real and true source of instruction, and were accompanied with that anointing which rendered them powerful and convincing to his hearers: under this conviction he was recorded as an acknowledged minister on the 11th of sixth month, 1818.

In the autumn of the same year a minute was granted him to attend the General and other Meetings in Scotland in company with his sister, Elizabeth Fry. During this journey, considering it a part of his Christian duty, he also visited most of the prisons in Scotland and the North of England, and published the result of his examinations in a valuable little work, immediately after his return, which we believe produced a great effect, in promoting much of that reform which took place about this time, in the construction and management of these abodes of wretchedness and crime.

In the year 1821 he commenced that extensive religious service in various parts of England, which in a few years had embraced almost every county, including London and its neighbourhood. In many of these engagements, family visits formed a part of his labours, and in most, if not all of them, public meetings with those not of our religious Society: for which service he was eminently qualified.

In the early part of the year 1827 he visited Ireland, in company with his sister Elizabeth Fry and her husband's sister Elizabeth Fry. This weighty engagement included a visit to the Yearly Meeting of Dublin, the several Quarterly Meetings, and most of the particular meetings of that island, as well as many public meetings. We believe this visit was attended with great benefit and satisfaction; and the cause of benevolence was not forgotten, as it comprised also a careful examination of the prisons in that country, and concluded by a representation to the Government thereon.

In the seventh month, 1827, he was married to Mary Fowler, the daughter of Robert and Rachel Fowler, of Melksham, in whom he found an affectionate and sympathizing helpmeet.

Many visits were paid by him in sundry parts of England during the three following years; and one in particular to the School at Ackworth, an establishment, for the prosperity of which he was deeply concerned, and which always partook largely of his solicitude. For many years he regularly attended its General Meetings, and was much engaged in promoting every effort for the improvement of its plans, the further extension of its usefulness, and particularly the religious education of the children. Its prosperity lay very near his heart.

During this course of constant dedication to the service of his Lord, he was again visited by domestic affliction, in the loss of his beloved wife, whom it pleased our Heavenly Father to remove by death, after a short illness, in the year 1835. Although this stroke was severely felt, his labours of love were not long suspended; but, having visited this year North Wales and other parts, he obtained a certificate in 1836 to visit the North of England and Scotland, holding meetings throughout.

For many years his mind had been impressed with a belief that it would be required of him to give himself up to a visit,

in the love of the Gospel, to the Society of Friends and others in North America, and after much conflict of mind he was brought to lay this subject before his friends.

It appears, that just previously to his setting out on this journey, he made the following striking memorandums on taking a review of his past life, with many of its exercises and experiences:—"I can with truth acknowledge that no greater means of usefulness and happiness have fallen in my way than our week-day meetings. Their quietness, the seriousness of those Friends who are in the regular habit of attending them, the sweet feeling of unity in our worship, and the liveliness of the ministry sometimes uttered on these occasions, are all hallowed in my mind and feelings; and were I asked what had been the happiest portion of my life, I believe I should not be far wrong in replying,—the hours abstracted from the common business of the world for the purpose of public worship. The sacrifice is greater than that which we have to make on the first-day of the week, when all business ceases; and the reward graciously bestowed has been to *me*, and I believe to many others, great in proportion. May none of my young friends and relatives, who belong to our Society, ever throw themselves out of the way of so precious a privilege!"

He sailed from Liverpool on the 8th of seventh month, 1837, and landed at Philadelphia on the 24th of the following month. At the close of this year, on looking forward to arduous service in the further prosecution of the work in which he was then engaged, he writes:—"I trust I am made deeply sensible of my own unworthiness and unfitness for the work. Oh! Lord, in the plenitude of thy mercies, undertake for me and let thy own glorious works praise Thee. It is a solemn thing for me to close the present year; and a cause of unutterable thankfulness in looking back upon past conflicts, that I am permitted to close it in peace. Praise the

Lord, O my soul ! and all that is within me bless and hallow His glorious name !”

In the course of this arduous engagement, our beloved friend visited most of the settlements of Friends on the American Continent, including those in Canada, held numerous public meetings, and visited Friends in their families in many places: and the testimonials with which he was furnished on his return, acknowledged that his public ministry had been acceptable and edifying, his private labours instructive and encouraging, and his life and conversation consistent with his Christian profession: towards the close of this visit he sailed for the West Indies, where he had religious service in the Danish, and in some of the British Islands. This visit to the West Indies also afforded him an opportunity of witnessing the happy results which had attended the emancipation of the Negroes in the English colonies. To one who had so long and so zealously laboured to effect this great and wonderful change, such an opportunity could not fail to be deeply interesting. And he embraced every suitable occasion afterwards of bringing the subject before the notice of those in authority, as well as of the public generally, with a view of promoting the abolition of slavery throughout the world.

He returned to the United States in the fourth month, 1843, and was favoured to reach his own home, in safety and in peace, on the 19th of the eighth month following, after an absence of three years.

On a review of this journey shortly afterwards, he made the following memorandum:—“An absence of excitement, —an unbroken tranquillity, are my happy portion. The broad seal of the Spirit of my God seems conspicuously to rest on the labours, perils, exercises, and engagements of the last three memorable years. The Lord be praised ! The Lord *alone* be praised !”

In the sixth month, 1841, he was liberated for religious

service in some parts of the north of Europe, including the Hague, Copenhagen, and Berlin, for visiting the meetings of Friends at Pyrmont and Minden, and for holding public meetings beyond their limits. In this journey he had the company of his beloved sister Elizabeth Fry.

In the tenth month of the same year he was united in marriage to Eliza Paul Kirkbride, daughter of Joseph and Mary Kirkbride, of Philadelphia; with whom he lived in close and affectionate union until the period of his death; and who was associated with him in all his subsequent religious engagements.

In 1843 his mind was again drawn in gospel love towards the Continent of Europe; and one of the special objects he had in view, was that of mingling in sympathy with those who, not being satisfied with a mere formal profession, were seeking better things for themselves. In this engagement his wife felt it her duty to accompany him, and they were accordingly liberated for the service. After having visited Paris, the South of France, including all the meetings of those professing with Friends there, and most of the large towns in Switzerland, with Strasbourg, Stutgard, and Brussels, they returned home, and renewed the engagement in the spring of the following year: when, commencing at Boulogne, they proceeded by way of Paris to Nantes and the South-west of France; and returning again by Paris to attend the Yearly Meeting, they subsequently visited the islands of Guernsey and Jersey.

In this journey, and during the greater part of the former one, they were accompanied by their valued friend Josiah Forster: and their sister Elizabeth Fry, having a certificate to visit Paris, proceeded so far with them on their way. In the course of these journeys, and of that in 1841, our beloved friend had access to the sovereigns of France, Denmark, Prussia, and Wurtemburg; with all of whom he had religious

communications, and also satisfactory intercourse on various subjects of a benevolent and philanthropic character.

In 1845 he again visited Scotland and some of the northern counties of England ; and not feeling quite clear of one of those districts, he was again liberated in the following year to complete the service. On returning from this visit, in which he had laboured diligently in the Gospel, he writes :— “ Surely it is not too much to say, that the dear Master was remarkably with us on these occasions, showing us tokens for good, and giving us a banner to be displayed for his truth, yet the creature truly has had nothing to glory in ; the language has been deeply felt :—‘ Be thou exalted O God above the heavens, and thy glory above all the earth.’ ”

The last service of this kind in which he engaged, was a visit to some of the smaller meetings in our own Quarterly Meeting, and a few in the adjoining counties, with many public meetings. The minute granted him for this undertaking had not been returned to the Monthly Meeting at the time of his decease, although the work had been fully completed.

It seems incumbent on us briefly to notice his labours of love in the different branches of Christian philanthropy. The slave-trade and slavery, capital punishments, and the inspection of prisons, as regarded their discipline and management, engrossed much of his attention for many years : and unwearied were his labours for the abolition of the former, and the improvement of the latter. We believe, that on more than one occasion, he succeeded, after great exertions, in obtaining a reprieve for a condemned criminal ; and in cases where this could not be effected, the visits which he paid to those *that were appointed to die* were such as became a minister of the Gospel of Christ. Some idea may be formed of the earnestness of his Christian zeal, and the force of his religious efforts on these occasions, from a simple narrative of one case which he published, and which has been very extensive.

ly circulated. Nor were his endeavours to effect the improvement of prisons confined to those at a distance. Amidst much opposition, he exposed the mismanagement of that in our own city, in which one of his ancestors had been confined for his Christian testimony, and which has since been removed.

It is sufficient only to mention his warm attachment to the Bible Society, and his continued labour for its support and prosperity; arising from his conviction of the vast importance of the sacred writings, and their blessed effects in promoting the religious improvement and welfare of the human race. And closely connected with this conviction, he was indefatigable in extending the blessings of education amongst the poorer classes of society. For these objects, he spared neither personal labour nor pecuniary aid; and his charitable donations to the poor and afflicted were commensurate with the enlarged means which Providence had placed in his power.

Earnest were his desires, that our religious Society should rightly occupy the place assigned to it by the Great Head of the Church; and so highly did he prize the value of Christian unity amongst his brethren, that he felt great exercise of spirit at the least interruption of it. In the twelfth month, 1821, we find the following entry in his Journal:—"Yesterday was a low, but edifying first-day, I felt much satisfaction in being permitted to be silent. How invaluable is the liberty of the Spirit as professed and enjoyed by Friends! In the afternoon meeting my mind was peculiarly drawn in near love and unity to our own Society; and the desolate heritages were commended in secret prayer to Him, who, I feel persuaded, has called us forth to bear peculiar, yet living testimonies; and thus to answer in His church universal a specific purpose. Would that that purpose were more fully accomplished, in and by us!"

On some recent occasions he had various causes of trial and uneasiness, and was brought very low in health and spirits; but that gracious and merciful God, whom he had endeavoured to serve and follow faithfully all his life long, saw his soul in adversity, and in very tender compassion removed the burdens which weighed so heavily on his sensitive spirit, enabling him to cast all his cares on Him, and even to rejoice in his goodness, and in his wonderful works to the children of men. In reference to some of these painful circumstances, he writes:—"I can truly say, I have done my *best*, my *very best*, my *all*, my *very all*; and now I think I can quietly leave it to Him, whom we all call Master. May I serve him better, and more entirely than I have yet done, though I know it must be in weakness; and may none of these storms and jealousies throw me off my guard in the meekness and patience of Christ, or in the least divert my attention from daily duty, and the diligent working out of the salvation of my poor unworthy soul. I have prayed for peace among the nations, peace in our Society, and peace in the deep interior of my own spirit; a blessing which I do, in a good degree, already enjoy; but to which, I have not the slightest pretensions, except in the abundant mercy of God in Christ Jesus. May it abound with us more and more, with joy in the Holy Ghost, and a truly thankful heart to the Father and Fountain of all our mercies!"

It will not be expected that we should here advert, at any length, to his writings; but it is right for us to express our belief, that in these undertakings, as in every other, he was actuated by a *sincere desire* to promote the glory of God, and the welfare of his fellow-men; and at the same time to maintain, with unflinching integrity, "the Truth as it is in Jesus."

But we must not omit to record the deep and abiding sense we have of the value of his Christian labours in the ministry at home. Here, as well as when called by his Divine Master

to visit distant portions of the heritage, his labours were abundant. The weightiness of his spirit on these occasions, the sound and edifying character of the doctrines which he preached, and the solemnity with which he approached the Throne of Grace in vocal prayer, are still fresh in the recollection of his friends. And whilst the correct and appropriate manner in which he introduced quotations from the Scriptures, afforded abundant evidence how frequent he was in reading those sacred records, how diligent in meditating upon them, and how careful not to misquote, or misapply them, he evinced a firm attachment to the principles of our religious Society, and a deep concern for the upholding of all its testimonies.

In thus recounting the labours and exercises of our beloved friend, we desire not to exalt him as an individual; but rather to show that the grace which was bestowed upon him, was not bestowed in vain; for we feel bound to express our conviction, that “by the grace of God” he was *what* he was; and, although largely gifted of his Lord, yet through submission to the humbling and regulating power of the Holy Spirit, these gifts were remarkably sanctified, and dedicated to his Master’s service. Resigning his will to the Divine will in very early life, in faith and child-like simplicity, he was led about and instructed, and in due time made eminently instrumental in turning many to righteousness, not only by the ministry of the word in the demonstration of the Spirit, but also by the still more powerful preaching of a consistent, watchful, dedicated life. Yet, though his labours were abundant in the cause of Truth, and he was always ready to spend and to be spent in the service of his Lord, he considered himself an unprofitable servant, and confessed, in deep abasement of soul, that he had not a straw to cling to, save the free pardoning love and mercy of God, in Christ Jesus his Saviour.

He was particularly careful to avoid obscuring one essential doctrine of the Gospel, by making another unduly promi-

nent: and his spirit was clothed with that fervent charity towards those who differed from him, which "never faileth," "doth not behave itself unseemly," "thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."

In the various relationships of husband, father, brother, neighbour, friend, he was a bright example, always preferring others to himself, and conscientiously endeavouring to fulfil his numerous duties, as in the sight of a heart-searching God. In common with all the faithful followers of the Lamb, tribulations were his abundant portion, but in obeying the commandments of the Lord, his peace might be said to flow as a river, and his righteousness as the waves of the sea.

For some weeks before his decease, he evinced an increased earnestness to accomplish all that appeared to him to be his duty to attend to; particularly in effective exertions for the relief of the poor and destitute, and above all, in the more immediate service of his God and Saviour.

He seemed to have a sense upon his spirit, that his day's work was hastening to its close; and on one occasion, a little while before his illness, he pleasantly remarked, "I think I have now at least set my outward house in order, which is a great relief." On the belief being expressed, that it was not the outward house only that was in readiness, he replied, with a look of great abasedness, "I trust, through pardoning mercy, it may be so; but of myself, I am the very poorest, most unworthy and infirm of human creatures." A fall from his horse appeared to be the exciting cause of his sudden removal. It gave him no pain at the time, and he was remarkably shielded from suffering of mind or body, throughout his short illness, of only eight days' continuance. There was much tender mercy manifest in this; as he had a natural shrinking from the pains and attendant circumstances of a dying hour; and expressed a fear that he should not have fortitude to meet them. A remarkable covering of heavenly

peace was spread over his sick chamber, and when the tide of life was gently, and, to himself, unconsciously ebbing out, he said, with a sweet and radiant smile upon his countenance, "I think I feel a little joyful;" and a few hours afterwards, amid a profound stillness, a deep and holy solemnity, his ransomed spirit took its flight, as we reverently believe, to the mansions of eternal rest and blessedness. Thus, having accomplished his day's work in the daytime, he was gently gathered, by a hand of unutterable love and mercy, from all the trials of this changing scene; and he has, we reverently trust, received from Him, who is the Judge of all, the blessed sentence of "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

He died on the 4th of the first month, 1847, and his remains were interred in Friends' burial-ground at Norwich, on the 12th of the same. There was an unusually large attendance, both of Friends and others, on this solemn occasion; his fellow-citizens, of every class, appearing deeply to sympathize with his sorrowing relatives and friends. He was in the 59th year of his age, and had been a minister nearly thirty years.

